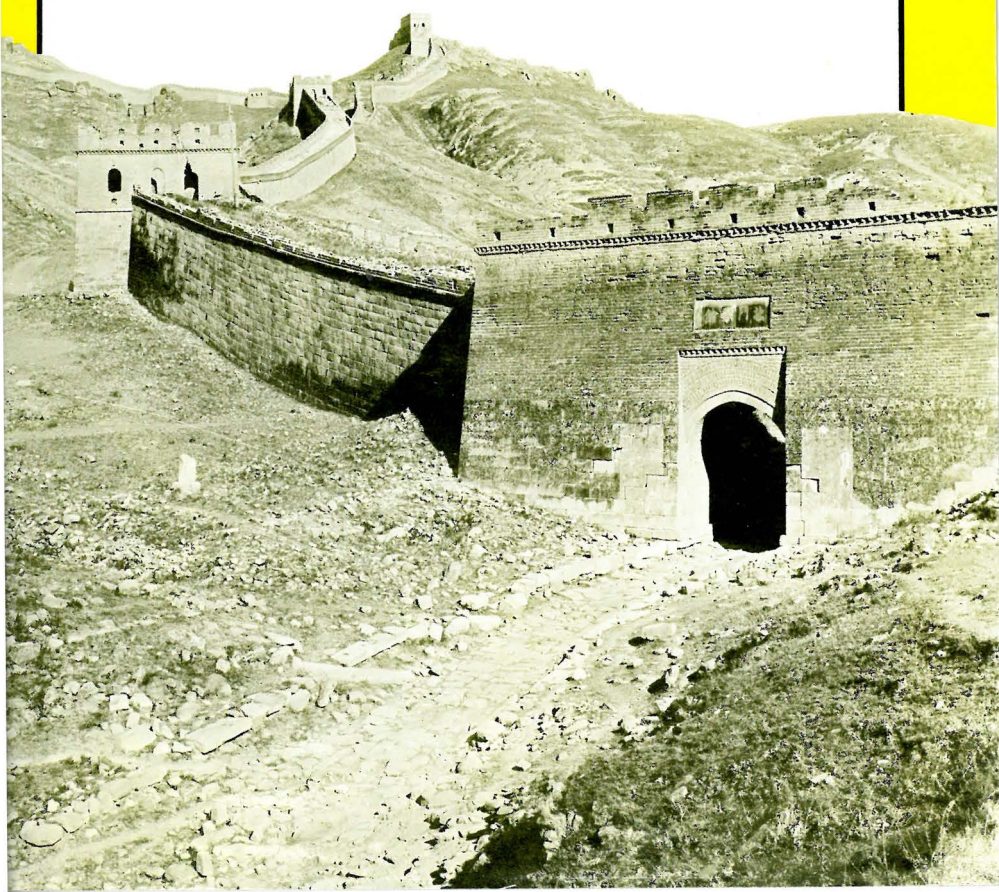


Shadowed by the Great Wall

**The Story of Krimmer Mennonite Brethren
Missions in Inner Mongolia (1922-49)**

A.K. and Gertrude Wiens



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Entrance to Chotzeshan Mission Compound.

**The Board of Christian Literature
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A. K. and Gertrude Wiens

Introduction

My heart tells me that I am writing the introduction to this book because every fiber of my being says "yes" to the countless evidences of God's grace and miracle-working power which I was fearfully yet tenderly privileged to experience during the days of the beginnings of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren mission work in China.

This is indeed a book about new beginnings. These are accounts of happenings involving the lives of pioneer missionaries in China. They tell the story of the vision of God's servants for the souls of men. They tell of the inestimable price paid to realize that vision. They tell something of the loneliness and pain of those who go to a far country to evangelize — but, they tell only a little — they only begin to reflect the agony and the ecstasy, the heartbreak of disappointment and the endowment of divine courage. They intimate, but are unable to describe, the heartbeat of a missionary and his children who face death yet experience God's peace.

These beginnings tell something of the hardships and the triumphs experienced by those who work at building the church of Jesus Christ.

New beginnings are never easy, and only those who have lived them can fully identify with the daily struggles and grace adequate for the hours of need.

Many years ago, my father, Rev. F. V. Wiebe, began to put into writing a part of this story. However, due to ill health, his dream was never realized. Therefore, we have Rev. A. K. and Gertrude Wiens to thank for the documentation of this history, originally a part of his thesis for a master's degree at the University of Southern California. We owe thanks also to Mrs. Laurene Peters who readied the manuscript for publication.

It is always significant to record history, but it becomes even more significant when it is the history of God at work building his church. We, his people, need to be made aware of his power manifest in our generation in just as significant and

visual a manner as it was in the days of the early church. I have personally seen God express his presence in miraculous ways in China, and I have felt the power of Satan — too real for comfort. Although only a few of us have shared these experiences, yet, as we relive them through our missionaries' eyes, our faith grows and we dare to reach out for our own miracle.

It is important that this book be put into print now, to make it possible for our older saints who prayed for, and contributed to the work in China, to have the joy of reading this account of the workings of God of which they were an integral part.

There is another significant fact which makes the publication of this book now, exceedingly timely. With the United States' reestablishment of diplomatic relations with China, it is increasingly important for us as a people to be informed concerning our denomination's history in that country. The new developments in China should challenge the church as never before.

Although the material in this book was originally intended to preserve the history of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren mission efforts in China, since the merging of the Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren conferences in 1960 its reading public has greatly enlarged. Because these conferences are now one, any part of our history belongs to all of us.

Those who have made this book of new beginnings available trust that its story will focus for us our responsibility to become personally involved in the world out there.

Rachel Wiebe Hiebert
June 16, 1979
Fresno, California

Editor's Foreword

As I walked the crooked and bumpy roads infested with bands of robbers, crawled into the dirty caves of the sick Chinese, and experienced their intense curiosity toward the western missionaries, I sensed the urgency with which this book was written. A. K. and Gertrude Wiens have told the story from their concept of missions in the first half of the twentieth century. The courage of these early missionaries, with their tremendous motivation to proclaim the gospel, reflects itself in their willingness to expose themselves to all kinds of trials in isolated situations. Their belief in God to do the supernatural was tested when personal belongings were destroyed by the Japanese soldiers and death of the missionary seemed imminent.

Putting this experience of life, courage, and devotion into a flowing story form, generated in me a degree of appreciation for the labor of the Wienses who had spent many years gathering, organizing, and translating much of the material from conference periodicals. My assignment to place such valuable material into the proper form, yet retain the authors' style and personality was a difficult task and put strict limitations on the rewriting. In spite of much effort in this direction, the degree of success remains a concern.

I consider it a privilege to have shared in the work with the Board of Christian Literature, who recognized the importance of this material and became the vehicle through which it could be published. I received full cooperation from Gertrude Wiens who gave her approval for rewriting and graciously retranslated sections from original sources.

Phyllis Martens and Betty Klassen read the manuscript and gave valuable suggestions. A word of thanks is due my husband, Burton, and J. B. Toews who continued to give encouragement.

A careful reader will have opportunity to enter the struggles of these early missionaries and experience the transforming power of the gospel. The methods employed may not necessarily represent the philosophy of missions today, but in the account we recognize the evidences of a true witness to Christ.

Laurene Peters, editor

Preface

For some time my wife, Gertrude, and I felt constrained to write an account of what God has done in Inner Mongolia through the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference. To our knowledge, no one has related this story in book form.

Almost 29 years have transpired since we left the field in 1948 and the accounts related in this book. We therefore readily admit that our recollection of the personal experiences and events that took place during our service in Inner Mongolia may be vague. We have therefore depended extensively upon mission reports published in *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, *Christian Witness*, Conference Yearbooks, personal notes of missionaries, interviews, diaries and letters. Most of the reports, written in the German language, required an adequate working knowledge of German to do the research.

The small KMB Conference, able to send a sufficient number of workers to staff the field of Inner Mongolia, supported these workers financially. Missionary work in this field was difficult. Their religions had a stranglehold on the population, and the countryside and towns were often overrun by bandits and armies. As missionaries on the field we could not boast of masses turning to the Lord; however, about five hundred converts were baptized on their confession of faith.

The major thrust of the pioneer mission work in Inner Mongolia was evangelism, with some emphasis given to the establishment of indigenous churches, the care of the sick, and the education of the children. These four emphases will be developed in this writing, describing the various methods employed to carry out each phase of the work.

We remind the reader that this book covers the Inner Mongolian mission work of the KMB Conference from 1922 to 1949. The political, economic, social, and ethnic religious aspects of the people are treated as they affected the mission work. We are not qualified to generalize for the vast population since we lived in China a comparatively short time. There is no

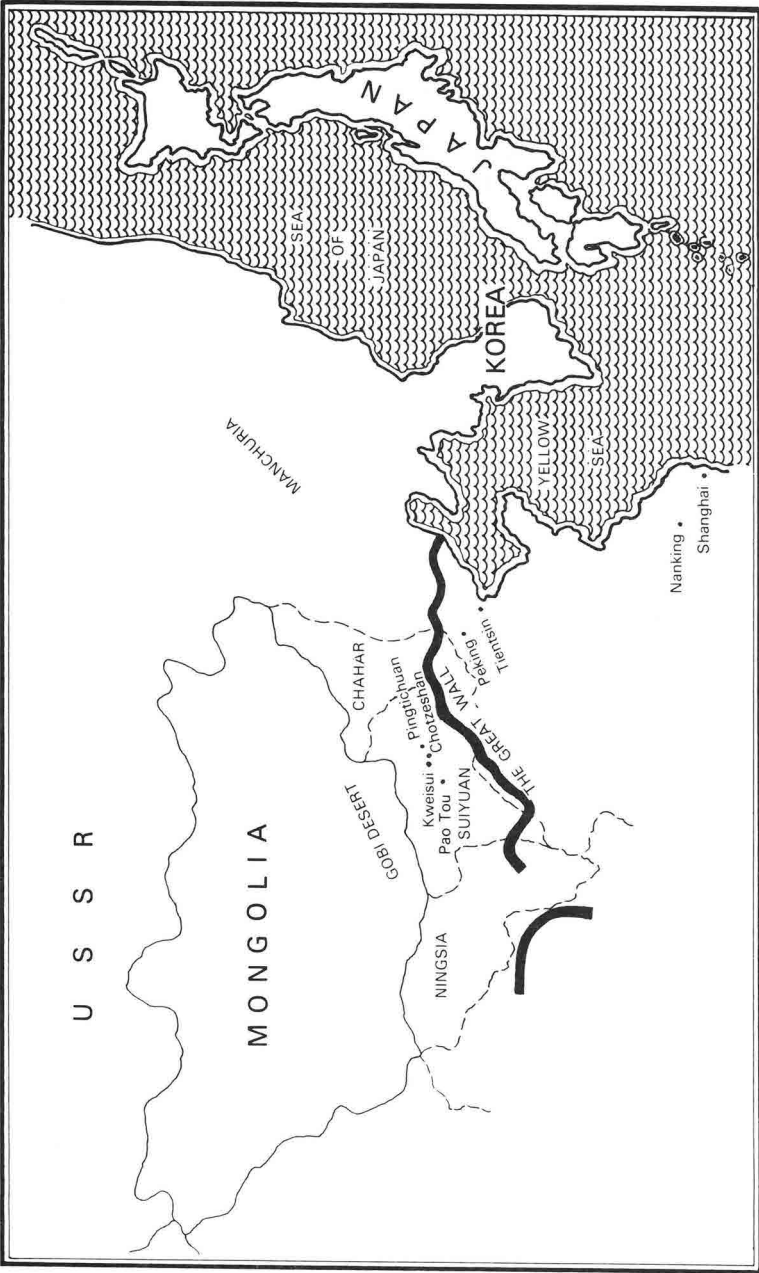
good reason, however, not to mention the admirable qualities which the Chinese possess in abundance. Few people have suffered as much as the Chinese through the centuries. Their land has often been occupied by foreign rulers, but in due time the Chinese have been able to drive out or absorb the enemies. Every culture has characteristics peculiar to its people. Those mentioned in this writing reveal the complexity of the Chinese culture.

The task of writing the manuscript became greater as time progressed and at times seemed insurmountable. The constant encouragement of family and friends, including Dr. Elmer Martens, Dr. J. B. Toews, members of the F. V. Wiebe family, and our former coworkers, gave us the motivation to complete the task.

Rachel Wiebe Hiebert, archivist for the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, made available to us many copies of *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, *Christian Witness* and *Yearbooks* of the KMB Conference, as well as a recording of an interview with her mother, Mrs. F. V. Wiebe. We thank Rev. Stuart Gunzel, former missionary to the Mongolians, for material taken from his book, *The Church in Asia*. Mrs. Malinda Nikkel of Newton, Kansas, copied many pages of *Der Wahrheitsfreund* which were not available in the Fresno Hiebert Library. Our son, Victor, reminded us of some almost forgotten experiences. We thank him and our daughter-in-law Hilda for initial criticisms and constant encouragement. We thank Rev. Paul H. Bartel, Dr. Harold Wiebe and Leslie H. Stobbe for reading the manuscript and offering valuable advice and counsel. Last, but not least we thank Dr. A. J. Klassen and the Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches for their understanding and continued encouragement.

It is our sincere desire and prayer that this account will glorify our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

A. K. and Gertrude Wiens



1

The Chosen Land

Chotzeshan, situated about 330 miles northwest of Peking, lies just beyond China's Great Wall. The Chinese called the wall the Van Li Ch'eng (10,000 li or 3,000-mile wall — it is not quite that long) which Emperor Chih Huang Ti built to ward off the barbaric hordes that swooped down from the north to conquer and subdue the Chinese people.¹ This wall extends 1,500 miles through northern China, winding over mountains and through valleys from Shan-hai-kuan on the east coast to Kansu Province in north central China,² cutting off Mongolia.

Mongolia, a high plateau around the Gobi Desert, is divided into the three provinces of Inner Mongolia (Ningsia, Suiyuan, and Chahar) and the Mongol People's Republic of Outer Mongolia. The mission field of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference was located in Suiyuan Province, later changed to Wu-Lan-Ch'a-Pu-Meng, with headquarters at Chotzeshan.

Inner Mongolia was mainly inhabited by Chinese, although dotted with Mongolian villages. In 1940 the population of Suiyuan Province, estimated at 2,830,693,³ was sparsely populated compared with other regions in China. According to tradition, one of the Mongolian princes suspected that the forests were infested with evil spirits; consequently, he had the trees uprooted, leaving the land bare. Much of the terrain is mountainous, reaching altitudes of about 5,000 feet. Nestled below, the fertile valleys provide farmland for the inhabitants. During our time in China, the long, cold winter months contrasted with the delightful summers. However, because of this cold climate only crops that matured in a short period could be grown successfully. Crops such as beardless oats, barley, spring wheat, flax, hemp, millet, potatoes, and opium poppies ripened before the killing frost in late August. Livestock, such



Seeding in backyard of mission compound.

as horses, cattle, and sheep, were also raised in this area.

Primitive tools were used to plow, cultivate, and harvest the crops. The plow, a block of wood tipped with a V-shaped piece of iron, was attached to the handles and beam. This tool, however, merely scratched the soil. These crude implements were drawn by a yoke of poorly fed oxen, or an ox teamed with a horse or mule. More prosperous farmers would goad a span of mules to do the job a little faster. Usually the sower followed the plow, sowing the grain in the furrow; at other times the seed was simply broadcast. During the growing season the grain was cultivated by farm laborers using long-handled hoes. The ripe grain was cut with a scythe, tied into sheaves with a handful of stalks, and set up into shocks. At the appointed time the bundles were hauled to the threshing floor and grain was separated from the chaff with a flail, or a yoke of oxen would be used to tread out the grain. The grain was then thrown into the air with a wide flat shovel, permitting the wind to blow the chaff away.

During July, the only frostless month of the year, the heavy rains began, causing severe damage to both crops and property. The sun-dried mud bricks, of which most homes were built, soaked quickly in the rains causing roofs and walls to collapse.

Into this territory, Suiyuan Province, North China, the Frank V. Wiebes of Hillsboro, Kansas, came to begin the work of the KMB mission.

At the time of her conversion, Mrs. Wiebe felt God was calling her to future mission work. Upon the completion of her education in 1906 at McPherson College in McPherson, Kansas, Mrs. Wiebe was granted credentials to teach in the public schools. Wiebe, also a student at McPherson College, completed his bachelor's degree with the class of 1909. During this time the Wiebes recognized their mutual call to mission work, and they were married June 16, 1909, in the Springfield KMB Church, Lehigh, Kansas. When Wiebe's cousin, Peter Wedel, missionary to Africa, was buried at sea while on his furlough voyage to America, Wiebe decided he would fill the place left void by Wedel's sudden death. The door to work in Africa, however, never opened to the Wiebes.⁴

In 1921 the conference at Carpenter, South Dakota, appointed the Wiebes for mission work to China. Even though the exact field was not designated, the Bartel mission at Tsao Hsien, Shantung, was in the minds of the delegates. However, deliberations with Bartel revealed that the missionaries of the China Mennonite Mission Society opposed the practice of another form of baptism. The KMB Conference practiced



Rev. and Mrs. Frank V.
Wiebe and family.

immersing the individual forward in contrast to the established practice of immersing the individual backward into the water. It was reasoned that to use two forms of baptism would cause confusion and division among the Chinese brethren. Even the suggestion to open another mission close by was considered ill-advised.

Several years of teaching, preaching, and preparation preceded the Wiebes' voyage to the China mission field. On January 24, 1922, they, with their five children and Margaret Thiessen of Inman, Kansas, left San Francisco on the ship Shinyo Maru, with stopovers in Hawaii and Japan. After sailing 27 days on the high seas, they arrived in Shanghai, weary but anxious to begin their assignment in this chosen land. In a letter to the conference in their homeland Wiebe wrote, "Thank God, we have arrived safely." Regarding the meeting with H. C. Bartel of the China Mennonite Mission Society of Tsao Hsien, Shantung, Wiebe wrote, "All of us were delighted to see him waiting for us as we disembarked."

After a few days shopping in Shanghai, the party boarded the train for Nanking where they stayed overnight and changed trains. The following day they arrived in Liuho, Honan, an outstation of the China Mennonite Mission Society, traveling the last 23 miles on horse-drawn carts.

In a report to the conference periodical, *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, Bartel wrote on April 29, 1922, that "the Wiebes are diligently studying the language and we will be pleased to have their assistance in the work of the mission."

The KMB Board of Foreign Missions encouraged the Wiebes to locate in a new field in China where they might open a mission work for that conference. Before this venture was undertaken, however, they sought Bartel's counsel regarding the feasibility of the Shantung field becoming the site of the KMB Conference work. The China Mennonite Mission Society workers, representing various denominations, were reluctant to practice the KMB Conference form of baptism and consequently decided to remain an independent faith mission.

"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord your God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deut. 31:6). Wiebe, assured that the Lord was going before them in this new venture, wrote, "Already in the homeland we had a compassion for the unevangelized inhabitants in Inner Mongolia. This feeling

intensified when we reached Tsao Hsien, Shantung Province." They now prayed repeatedly for the Mongolian people. To investigate the mission possibilities at that early date, however, seemed impossible. Still they kept praying for an opening to the land in northwest China. "The opportunity to make that move came sooner than anticipated,"⁵ Wiebe wrote.

J. M. Zook of Tabor, Iowa, representative of the Hephzibah Faith Mission, sailed to the Orient on the same ship with the Wiebes. Zook, however, disembarked in Japan to visit the Hephzibah Faith mission field there and later sailed on to China to search for virgin mission territory. At Tsao Hsien, the Wiebes and Zook met again. Zook, together with the Larsons and Miss Chuning, who had just completed language study at the Peking Union Language School, set out to find a place of work. When questioned why they did not explore the possibilities of opening a field south of Tsao Hsien, they replied: "The South has sufficient workers, whereas the people of Inner Mongolia need messengers to bring them the gospel."

After Zook and the three young missionaries had explored the Northwest, they sent word to the Wiebes that the Inner Mongolian field was wide open and that the Hephzibah Faith Mission expected to open a work at Pingtichuan. Zook invited them to investigate the field and assured them that if the Lord so led, they would be most welcome in Mongolia.

The Wiebes gratefully accepted the call as from the Lord and immediately made prayerful preparations to respond to the challenge. Because Bartel was fluent in the Chinese language, knew the geography of the land, and was familiar with the customs of the people, Wiebe invited him to investigate the Inner Mongolian territory. Committing themselves and their families to the Lord for protection and guidance, the two men set out to claim a new area for the cause of Christ.

On the third day of their journey, traveling northwest, they passed through two long tunnels; at once the ancient Great Wall of China towered before them. The railroad ran parallel to the wall for many miles before cutting through the wall where it turned north after passing through Tatung. The wall continued over high mountains and passed through deep valleys. For a while the travelers lost sight of the wall, but on the fourth day it reappeared. This time the wall was much farther north, where it had for centuries served as the boundary line.

In Peking the men changed trains and proceeded along the Ping Sui Line, which ran from Peking through Kalgan, Tatung, Fengchen, Pingtichuan, Chotzeshan, Kueisui and as far as Pao Tou, the western terminal. Altogether the railroad was well over three hundred miles long.

Arriving at Pingtichuan the weary men were indeed happy to meet Zook, the Larsons and Miss Chuning again. The Hephzibah Faith Mission had already purchased two acres of land and were digging a drinking well. At the same time they were laying the foundation for temporary living quarters later used as a school building.

Early Monday morning Wiebe, Bartel, and Zook started out in search of a suitable area for the KMB mission. The journey was made on a mule cart constructed of rough lumber with two huge wheels that turned with the axle. The animal between the shafts carried the weight and the one hitched directly in front pulled the load. Because the road was rough and stony the men preferred to walk most of the way. They passed through many villages without a Christian witness. Wiebe wrote: "We were moved with compassion for the souls of the lost."

On their arrival in Taolin, the county seat, northwest of Pingtichuan, Wiebe became ill with a fever. At the scene, national onlookers, many of whom had never seen a foreigner, curiously gazed upon the newcomers until the missionaries vanished behind closed doors at bedtime. The following morning the fever had left Wiebe, and the group, forced to make an important decision, continued their journey.

The road to the northeast led to a sparsely settled area, which was further removed from the Peking Suiyuan railroad. Wiebe wrote, "The Lord directed us to travel southwest." This route led them to Chotzeshan which lay in a fertile valley, surrounded by timberless mountains. Chotzeshan (table mountain) was about 50 miles west of Pingtichuan, the city from which the three men had started their journey. The Swedish Alliance Mission was located about 60 miles west of Chotzeshan.

Mierberg of the Swedish Alliance Mission informed the men that there were plans for a railroad to Urga and then later to Siberia, with an extension either from Chotzeshan or from Pingtichuan. (However, because of the many wars and frequent recessions these proposed projects never materialized.)

The Swedish Alliance Mission, an affiliate of the CIM

(China Inland Mission), extended an invitation to Wiebe to take over an area between Pingtichuan and Kueisui in Suiyuan Province; therefore Chotzeshan, an unwallled town of about five thousand people, was selected as the site for erecting the mission station.

A mutual interest in a four-acre piece of ground between two rivers gave the men the assurance that God had not only chosen the field of labor, but also designated the exact place to build the new mission. The plot, however, was not purchased until the Wiebes later moved to Chotzeshan. The mission field later extended 50 miles east from Chotzeshan to Pingtichuan, 60 miles to Hu-Ho-Hao-T'e on the west, 30 miles to Lian Ch'eng on the south, and about 100 miles to Outer Mongolia.

In the autumn of 1922 the KMB Board of Foreign Missions accepted a ten-point program for the founding of the mission in Suiyuan Province, North China:

1. That the conference build a mission station at Chotzeshan, Suiyuan Province, as recommended by H. C. Bartel and F. V. Wiebe.
2. That Bartel and Wiebe purchase a suitable place in Chotzeshan to build a mission center.
3. That the conference acquire legal ownership of the said property.
4. That \$2,000 be advanced by the conference for the purchase of land and the erection of necessary buildings.
5. That the \$2,000 be raised as follows:
 - a. \$1,000 which had been lent to the KMB Publishing House be refunded by that organization.
 - b. \$1,000 from the Mary Pauls estate.
6. That Mr. and Mrs. F. V. Wiebe supervise the new China field.
7. That KMB missionaries stationed at the China Mennonite Mission Society field, Tsao Hsien, Shantung, upon the recommendation of the Board of Foreign Missions, may be transferred to the new China field.
8. That the workers of the China Mennonite Mission Society and those of the new China field receive equal financial support.
9. That the native workers and the orphanage at Tsao Hsien be supported as heretofore.
10. That candidates for China be given the choice of selecting the field to which they wish to be sent.⁶

2

Move to Inner Mongolia

On March 26, 1923¹ Wiebes began preparations to leave the China Mennonite Mission Society in Tsao Hsien for their move to Inner Mongolia. Wiebe reported, "We expect to undertake the move in the beginning or the middle of May in order to avoid the heat." He also appealed to the home constituency to pray "that God will protect us and give wisdom in establishing the work."

Several Chinese couples were selected to travel with the Wiebes and assist them in their new venture. Lai En would be their evangelist and language teacher, Fei En their carpenter, and Fei Fan their cook. Since Bartel desired to make a prolonged visit to Inner Mongolia even though his services were extensively sought after in his own mission, he took time to accompany and assist these new recruits. Bartel, with his wisdom and humor, provided a welcome diversion.

On Sunday, May 13, 1923,² a special day of blessing at the Tsao Hsien mission station, a young Chinese couple was united in marriage during the morning service. In the afternoon the believers observed Holy Communion combined with a farewell service for the Wiebes, Margaret Thiessen, and the Chinese workers who were to accompany them. After a stay of over a year in Tsao Hsien many friendships had been formed and the mutual love and devotion of the missionaries and Chinese became visible at the time of parting.

The following morning, May 14, 1923,³ the party set out on their journey. Nearly all the Chinese believers in the mission compound, together with the missionaries, gathered at the site of departure. After a prayer and the singing of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," the last farewells were spoken and

the passengers mounted the wagons. The party leaving consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe, their six children, Margaret Thiessen, H. C. Bartel, and five Chinese adults, accompanied by varied shapes and sizes of baggage and bundles to accommodate these people. Several milk goats followed the procession; they would play an important part in the missionary diet in Mongolia. The morning, already quite warm, did not deter the young or the old from escorting the party a long distance. Only after the travelers insisted their friends return to the mission station, did they turn back.

The missionary party traveled via Peking to reach the new field. The dusty roads, infested with robbers, were dangerous and difficult. Claiming the Lord's promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Mt. 28:20), they proceeded on their way.

As the missionary party neared a village, they saw a huge stage and hundreds of people milling around. Not understanding the nature of the gathering, the travelers became uneasy, but as the wagons drew nearer they observed a theatrical play in progress. The masses, noticing the travelers, were immediately drawn to them, especially their children. The natives always admired and carefully scrutinized foreign children, whose fair complexion and tousled blonde hair aroused their curiosity. Only by touching the hair would the natives believe it was real and not only ornamental.

Here the travelers, surrounded by curious onlookers, quickly dismounted from their wagons and hurried into a room in the courtyard. In order to reserve a little space and privacy for themselves, they barred the door. After a meal and a short rest they again mounted the wagons and their journey continued.

The tired and dusty missionary group, unharmed by robber bands, reached the Liu Ho railroad town towards evening. Even five-month-old Barbara Wiebe remained happy and cheerful in spite of being almost unrecognizable because of the dust. Here in Liu Ho the missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Birkey, accommodated them for the night. The refreshing bath and substantial meal were all they needed to insure a restful night.

The next morning, committing themselves to the Lord's protecting care, they boarded the train to Cheng Chou. To lessen expenses they chose to travel third class; however, the

rules and regulations common in the homeland were not observed on these trains. Sometimes the smoke from the train was so dense that only the bare outline of the passengers could be seen. Traveling with a family of small children, crowded and exposed to filth and dirt, the missionaries found this trip uncomfortable. After a long and tiring day, they found lodging in a Chinese guest house in Cheng Chou. The following morning the group traveled all day and through the night. As they attempted to find a comfortable position on the hard wooden seats, the passengers felt as though morning would never come.

The railroads, controlled by different sections of the country, insisted on reloading their personal belongings at the train-changes. In Peking the next morning the women and children remained with their baggage while Bartel and Wiebe went into the city to scout for lodging. Since they planned to remain in Peking several days to transact business and make necessary purchases, they set out to rent a few rooms. More than an hour had passed when the men returned to inform the waiting group that foreigners, looked upon with considerable suspicion, were not welcome in Chinese guest houses or inns.

This distrust of foreigners was brought about, to some extent, by the decision of the peacemakers at Versailles after World War 1 to leave in Japanese hands the German concession secured at the close of the Boxer Uprising. The spirit of protest had spread among students and merchants, with the students holding mass demonstrations at Peking University and other institutions. Merchants, together with recently organized labor unions, closed their shops and joined the movement. This movement merged the new cultural concepts of science and the new patriotism into a program of open opposition to foreigners.⁴ Obviously missionaries were not being received with open arms by the people.

The two men finally found rooms in the Peking Union Language School where missionaries could stay while passing through this capital city. Hungry and tired following their wearisome journey, the group went to their assigned rooms and prepared for lunch. Since lodging had been secured early, Bartel and Wiebe left to orient themselves in the city, assuring the remaining party they would return soon. Their sight-seeing tour took the men into several areas of the city and outside the city wall.

Hours passed, but the two men did not return. The

knowledge of the anti-foreign sentiment in the city gave Mrs. Wiebe some anxious moments. Finding comfort in Psalm 91, she retired for the night. At midnight a knock at the door immediately brought hope that her vigil was over, but it was only another resident looking for his room. Fatigued, Mrs. Wiebe finally dropped off to sleep. At daybreak she awoke, but there was still no sign of the men. During breakfast the men returned, friendly, cheerful, and apologetic, to tell their story.

During the previous afternoon they had gone to the military camp outside the city wall to visit some of Bartel's former orphan boys. Time passed quickly and when the two men returned to the city gate, they found it locked for the night. The guards, refusing to yield to their pleadings, turned them away. Having no other way to enter the city or to let the anxious group know of their plight, they had to wait for morning.

After two days of shopping and rest in Peking, the missionary group continued their journey to Inner Mongolia. Since his wife again suggested they travel third class, Wiebe reluctantly consented. The mob of passengers, with all their baggage, made it nearly impossible to board the train, much less to find a seat. The Chinese passengers took almost anything with them, large and small, including bedding rolls, birds, and bird cages. One passenger proudly placed a sewing machine stand beside his seat. Whoever could not carry his bundle through the door, pushed it through the window; there seemed to be no rules or regulations about boarding the train. Passengers trying to exit while others were boarding, created indescribable confusion.

From all they had seen the missionary party sensed what might happen at the arrival of their train. As expected, when the train arrived, each one grabbed his belongings and dashed for the nearest car. Because of the crowding and pushing, the people became restless and anxious, with the missionary group and their small children in the middle of the crowd. Finally, with much pushing to get their bundles through the door, they succeeded in boarding the train and arranged sufficient seating for themselves on their suitcases and other baggage.

At two o'clock the next morning they arrived in Ping-tichuan, where the Wiebe family, together with Margaret Thiessen, left the train and walked about a mile to the Hephzibah Faith Mission. Though the night was dark, chilly

and wet from a recent rain, the walk was a welcome change. Even little Franklin toddled along without a murmur. The Larsons and Miss Chuning of the Hephzibah Faith Mission invited the Wiebe family to spend several days with them until living quarters in Chotzeshan could be arranged.

Bartel and the Chinese helpers continued with most of the baggage from Pingtichuan to Chotzeshan where they again felt the consequences of the Boxer Insurrection. Repeatedly, the early missionaries reaped the fruit of politically-inspired hatred. The Chinese mistrusted all white people, and the Wiebes were no exception. Consequently, it was difficult to obtain a dwelling for the missionary family. Bartel, knowing how to deal with the Chinese, negotiated through his Chinese friend, so that a temporary dwelling could be rented. Bartel reported, "We arrived in Chotzeshan at daybreak on May 22, 1923, and immediately went to see the dwelling which a Chinese friend had rented for the Wiebe family and staff."⁵ After becoming acquainted with some of the people in the town, Bartel felt assured the location would be suitable for the Wiebes. Towards evening Wiebe and son Harold arrived with the rest of their belongings. Two days later Mrs. Wiebe, the children, and Margaret Thiessen arrived. They found the men courageously cleaning and putting things in place while the curious natives crowded around to see what was happening. The house had been a store and dwelling combination, and at the time was considered to be haunted. Animals had been kept in the house; consequently, there was much to clean.

Since the building had been used as a store, it was 20 by 10 feet — much longer than the ordinary Chinese home. The front of the house faced the street and permitted passersby to look in by breaking through the parchment which covered the wooden grating built into the wall for security against thieves, and which also served as windows. One evening Mrs. Wiebe, unpacking some trunks by lantern light, glanced toward the window and noticed the parchment was dotted with black spots. What could they be? Each spot was a Chinese eye peering in to see what the foreigners were doing. With a moist finger tip, quickly and silently, the Chinese had drilled little peepholes in the paper. In time the missionaries recognized it was only curiosity that prompted the Chinese to watch.

Inside the house a small *kang* or brick bed, built in the back part of the room, had on one side a built-in saucer-like

kettle in which all food was cooked. In cold weather the room was kept comfortable by routing the smoke from under the kettle through a complicated set of flues under the surface of the *kang*. The *kang* also served as a bed at night and a sitting or working place during the day. A small cubicle at the extreme end of the room provided some privacy for Margaret. Curtains divided the rest of the room into semi-private sections.

A mud-brick wall surrounded the small backyard. As time passed, the Wiebes noticed that the mud wall was steadily wearing down — the result of the Chinese climbing over to see what the foreigners were doing.

Having settled the family in the house, Bartel and Wiebe went to locate an area to claim for the Inner Mongolia mission station. Purchasing the plot, one and a half miles from the house, was not favorable at that time, because of the high price. They committed the matter to the Lord, however, and trusted him for further guidance.

In the afternoon Bartel boarded the train to Kueisui, capital of Suiyuan Province to visit Mierberg, superintendent of the Swedish Alliance Mission and to exchange a money order for silver currency. This exchange was important not only to Bartel, but also to the new work in Chotzeshan, since no local banks were able to make such a business transaction.

Bartel continued still farther west to Saratsi, where the Swedish Alliance Mission had another station and a large orphanage, which especially interested Bartel. While visiting there, Bartel, together with one of the missionaries, visited the mission cemetery where 20 missionaries of the Christian and Missionary Alliance of America, murdered in the Boxer uprising, were buried. Later, after the Swedish Alliance Mission took over the work, the dreaded disease of typhus, so prevalent in Mongolia and North China, claimed the lives of another six missionaries. Bartel, sobered by the commitment of the early missionaries, stood in silent prayer.

From Saratsi Bartel turned northeast, traveling by train to the neighboring mission station, Pingtichuan, 50 miles away. Here the Larsons, whom he had met in Tsao Hsien earlier, generously lent him their horses and a young native worker to serve as guide. A conservative estimate of Bartel's journeys at that time would be about 450 miles.

The purpose of his trip was twofold. First, Bartel simply wished to look at the region where the Mongolians formerly



A Chinese kitchen, showing method of preparing food.

grazed their herds, but where now the Chinese were tilling the soil. This precinct covered an area of about one hundred square miles, much of it densely populated. These Chinese first learned of Jesus' teaching through Catholic missionaries. The second purpose of Bartel's trip was to visit the Swedish Mongol Mission, 133 miles from the Chotzeshan station. According to Stuart Gunzel's chapter in *The Church in Asia*, the largest of the groups working in Inner Mongolia was the Swedish Mongol Mission, which began its work in 1905. They were preceded by the missionaries of TEAM, (The Evangelical Alliance Mission) who first entered in 1895, then by missionaries of the Assemblies of God, the Mongolian Indian Mission, the Brethren, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and some independents. The Swedish Mongol Mission, probably the most successful, reported, "In 1942 we had three stations and over 100 converts."⁶

Before Bartel returned to his home in Shantung, he assisted Wiebe in purchasing the plot of ground where the mission buildings could be erected. During Bartel's absence the landholder had reconsidered and reduced his price. They paid

\$180⁷ in U.S. money for approximately four and a half acres, a flat basin surrounded by hills, west of town near the railroad station. A small stream flowing through the far end of the plot made it an ideal location for a mission compound.

Following the purchase of the plot in May of 1923, the building program was begun, with the dwelling for the missionary family claiming priority. Building materials had to be purchased and workers hired. After being kindly informed by the courteous Chinese neighbors that it was impossible to purchase burned bricks or lumber in that locality, Wiebe had to make other plans. All the lumber would have to be cut from trees which could be acquired only in another city, and the mud bricks would have to be made on the premises. The needed stone could be obtained from nearby quarries.

Wiebe looked for mud-brick makers, offering them 57 cents per 1,250 bricks. As soon as a few men agreed to the price and began to mold bricks, others conformed and before long 20 men were at work. Wiebe, thankful for all the help he could get, worked long hours so the necessary buildings could be built before the cold weather set in. During the construction the Wiebes continued living in East Chotzeshan. It required a healthy body to walk that distance at least twice a day to



Carpenters sawing large timber.

oversee the building program. At one time during the construction, Wiebe suffered from severe tonsillitis. First taking the matter to the Lord, Mrs. Wiebe, with the aid of a flashlight and a sharp scalpel, lanced the offending tonsil and her husband regained his health. In October, before the severe winter set in, the buildings were ready for occupancy.

The mission compound was divided into three courts: the outer or first court where the Chinese evangelists and workers lived; the middle or second court, occupied by the foreign missionaries; and the large court in the backyard, used in various ways throughout the span of the missionaries' terms. This court contained a barn for the animals, a room for the animal caretaker, a room for older homeless men, and an opium clinic. The rest of the compound was used for gardening and recreation.

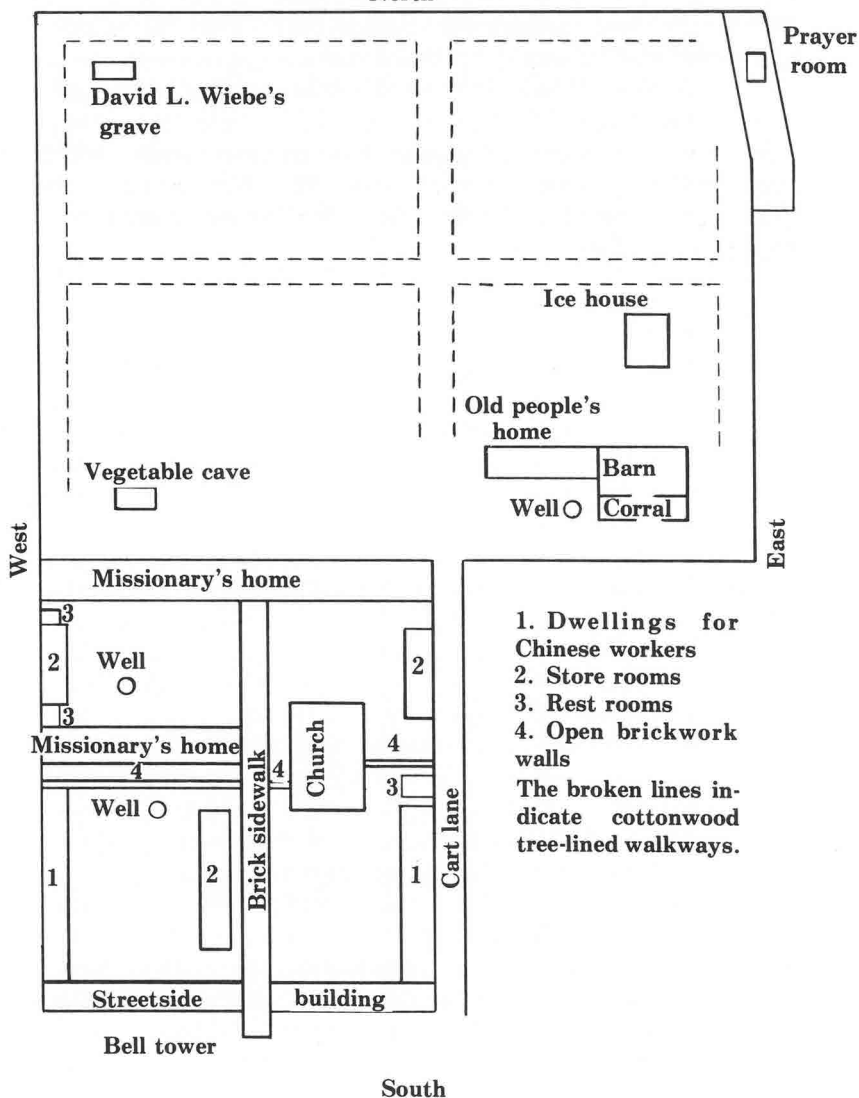
A ten-foot high wall of rock and mud-bricks, constructed around the compound in 1924, served as a protection against thieves. Two strands of barbed wire stretched along the top and two large Mongolian dogs standing guard added to their protection. Noble, a very faithful watchdog belonging to the Wiebes, was killed by intruders during the National Revolution. Another watchdog, acquired later by succeeding missionaries, apparently found the other side of the wall more interesting and occasionally jumped over without much effort. Even the hobblestick, which he wore because of his escapades, did not deter him. The next morning he would be waiting at the front gate of the compound to come home.

In the northeast corner of the backyard a second wall, built to check the flood waters, also formed a small triangular space which contained a prayer room. This area served as a place of quiet meditation for the missionaries and the national workers, as well as a secret refuge in case bandits came.

In 1925 when the Peter Ratzlaff family came from Tsao Hsien, Shantung, to Chotzeshan to assist in the work, another dwelling was needed. This six-room home, built in the middle court facing south and near the gray brick wall, separated the outer and middle courts. Later, two storage buildings were constructed along the east and west boundaries of the middle court.

The brick church building was constructed in the middle court but opened into the outer court. It was built during the spring and summer of 1931 and dedicated to the glory of God on

North



A map of the Chotzeshan missionary compound.

August 9, 1931, just before the Wiebes returned to their homeland.

In peaceful times there was no transportation problem traveling east or west. Several trains, reaching Peking in 16 to 18 hours, passed through Chotzeshan daily. That the mission compound was so near the railroad was a great convenience for the missionaries. However, to reach the outstations in the north meant long hours of wearisome travel. It was not always advisable to depend on public bus transportation, which functioned only when the need arose. Therefore, much of the missionary's travel to the north was done by ox or mule cart, bicycle, or on foot.

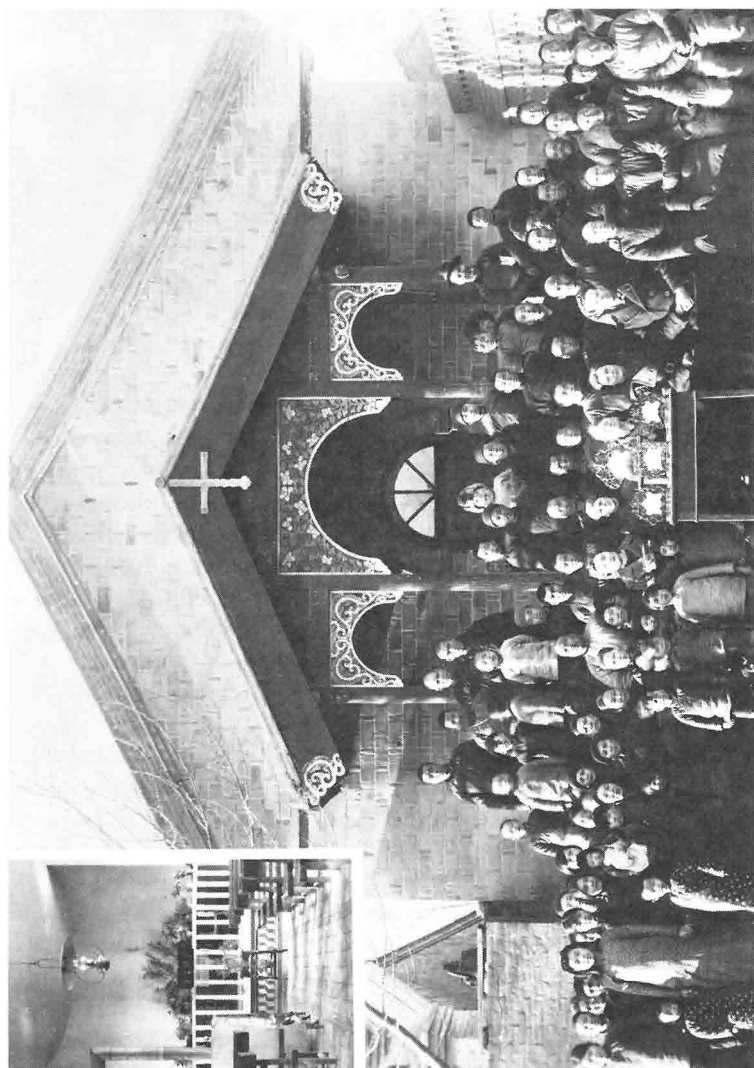
3

Building His Church

During the first months, due to the lack of a meeting place, services were held in the streets. Later a small chapel, built on the mission compound, provided a place for worship services. In 1931 the brick church building was erected and in subsequent years two more chapels were built, one in the center of the business district and the other in East Chotzeshan. Attendance varied at these chapels with many worshipers primarily interested in clothes and food rather than a foreign gospel. Because of disease and poverty many people sought the missionary for material and physical help.

The first church service in the chapel, 18 by 40 feet, was scheduled for October 24, 1923. Though the Wiebes had worked late on Saturday, some of the worshipers came early Sunday morning to make sure everything was ready for the first service. On this beautiful sunny autumn day the excitement became contagious. Rough planks served as benches, and a packing box covered with one of Mrs. Wiebe's lovely tablecloths became the pulpit. Curiosity may have been the stimulus, but the chapel filled with a diversified crowd, including businessmen from town, railroad officials, soldiers still in their uniforms, farmers, and shepherds in their long sheepskin coats and big fur caps, which they did not remove in the chapel. Women and children were also present. All looked forward to something they had not experienced before. Some talked aloud and had to be hushed again and again. Others rose out of their seats to take a good look at the surroundings. Gradually the people became quiet and the service could begin.

Several songs were sung and after the function of prayer had been carefully explained to them, the audience was asked to



The Chotzeshan church. Inset, a shot of the building's interior.

rise and pray. A message about the prodigal son according to Luke 15 followed. This wonderful story of the father's love for his lost son captivated the listeners; and, desiring to hear more, the people returned in larger numbers for the afternoon service. Stirring testimonies from individuals in the congregation supplemented the interesting service.

The following February Mr. and Mrs. David M. Hofer, associated with the Gospel Mission in Chicago and editors of *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, served the Inner Mongolian Mission for 40 days. Hofer preached the gospel; and he and his wife were an inspiration to the Wiebe family. The Hofers, contributing liberally to the work of missions, made the brick church building in Chotzeshan a reality.

Wiebe, full of praise and thanksgiving to God for the firstfruits on the Mongolian field, wrote: "Ten precious souls were baptized and received into the church August 31, 1924. The candidates, examined at length, were found to have experienced the new birth. The baptism, conducted in the cold mountain stream, did not cause hesitation in the new converts."



A converted native woman, with customary bound feet.

He continued: "Among the candidates were our three oldest children, Rachel (Mrs. Waldo Hiebert), being the first to step into the water, her sister Blondina (Grace) and brother Harold followed." The remaining seven were national converts, among whom were elders Wang and Yang, still active in the ministry when the last missionaries had to leave in 1948.

A year later, August 23, 1925, three persons were baptized, including two women. These native women, the first to be baptized, represented a great victory for the church. Their foot bindings posed problems for the women and made them averse to water. (The custom of binding feet in infancy, begun in the 10th century A.D., demonstrated the subordination of women to men.)

The communion service, a totally new experience for the converts, was carefully and clearly explained according to the Word of God. The practice of footwashing also required a thorough explanation before the new Christians were ready to wash each other's feet. In one instance, the missionaries noticed that three men gathered around one pan of water washing another brother's feet. The women, giggling and murmuring, found this practice embarrassing. Further, the wet bandages bound tightly around their feet, were uncomfortable.

Christmas provided opportunity to teach Christian practices and acquaint the Chinese with the "One" around whom those practices revolve. On December 25 people began coming for the Christmas program. Inside the chapel seats filled quickly; many stood along the walls and still others peered in from the outside. Boys and girls who had attended Sunday school during the year recited Bible verses and sang songs for this program. The audience marveled to hear their children perform in such a manner.

Soon after Christmas, illness caused the missionary couple in the neighboring mission of Pingtichuan to return to their home in the United States, leaving only Miss Chuning at the station. A plea was sent to the Wiebes: "Can you help in some way?" After prayerful consideration, the Wiebes' three oldest children were sent to keep the missionary company; and, in exchange, Miss Chuning tutored them in their school work. Pingtichuan, though only 50 miles from Chotzeshan, seemed very distant in case of illness or political unrest; therefore, parting from parents and the rest of the family brought tears.

In time the Wiebes realized political unrest was developing.

Soon the call came to the inhabitants to prepare themselves for an attack, for the soldiers were turning traitor and joining the robber bands. Alarmed, the people ran here and there, not knowing where to go. However, the missionaries and other believers sought comfort from Psalm 34:7, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." The three children in Pingtichuan were the Wiebes' greatest concern; the distance of 50 miles suddenly seemed much farther. The Christians, summoned for prayer, read Psalm 34 and sang "Peace, Perfect Peace." The following evening the soldiers, convinced of their wrongdoing, went back to their appointed posts.

Following this incident one of the soldiers was thrown from his horse and severely injured. The Wiebes seized the opportunity to establish relationships and nursed the soldier during his convalescence. As a result, the general, as well as the soldiers, became friendly with the missionaries.

On April 8, 1925, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Ratzlaff, missionaries in Shantung Province, came to assist the Wiebes in Mongolia. On Easter Sunday the Chotzeshan church not only celebrated the resurrection of Christ, but also welcomed Peter Ratzlaffs into their fellowship. The Easter message, "Faith and Confidence," given by Ratzlaff, was listened to carefully by a large attentive audience. Two Chinese brethren, also from Shantung, spoke inspiring words for their Lord.

The first years of loneliness had been overcome and the Wiebes wrote, "We are delighted to have colleagues with whom to share our joys and sorrows."¹

In the spring of 1926 Ratzlaff set out to do village work. At night he slept in a tent to escape the insects in the Chinese homes. The tent, a great attraction for the Chinese, gave Ratzlaff opportunity to proclaim the gospel to them when they came to inspect it. Regarding this ministry, Ratzlaff wrote: "Now is the sowing season and surely the harvest will come in due time." In a subsequent letter Ratzlaff wrote, "On September 12 fourteen souls were baptized. Others requested baptism, but we suggested they wait because their testimonies were rather vague."²

In the Chotzeshan church, the only congregation with an organized Sunday school, missionaries, native evangelists, and Bible women instructed classes. By contrast the outstations, with few members, relied on the evangelist to visit them.

Christian Endeavor was organized in the Chotzeshan church, which gave the Chinese people opportunity for participation. The women of the Chotzeshan church assembled every week for a worship service, while the Christian women in the outstations had less formal gatherings, spending more time in house visitations.

On August 19, 1926, Anna Klassen joined Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Bartel, who had spent furlough time in the homeland, for a voyage across the Pacific ocean, arriving in China after 14 days. Since the civil war had made travel difficult, Anna waited at the Bartel mission in Tsao Hsien, Shantung, until a safer time to travel to Chotzeshan. George K. Willems, stationed on the Shantung field and due for a furlough, decided to visit the mission in Mongolia before the family returned to America. So in the fall of 1926 Willems escorted Anna Klassen on her trip to the Inner Mongolian Mission.

The Wiebes met Mr. Willems and Anna Klassen in Tientsin, and, before returning to Chotzeshan, purchased the needed clothes, food supplies, and other articles. It was nearly a year since they had been able to order or buy supplies from Peking because of the war. The train trip back to Chotzeshan required four days in contrast to about 18 hours during peaceful times. The weather was cold and the coaches had little or no



Rev. and Mrs. Peter Ratzlaff



Wang Chang Lao and wife

heat. On November 17, 1926 the Chotzeshan church formally welcomed Anna Klassen, who soon became fully involved with the work at the mission.

During this time, progress in the work became evident. The Sunday morning devotional hour, completely under the leadership of the nationals, continued to grow. Four Sunday school classes, totaling about 80 pupils, were taught. Of these, 30 boys from the day school especially enjoyed Sunday school because they were able to read. The preaching service, held in the afternoon, was usually well attended. During the winter months several weeks of special meetings were held. G. K. Willems from Tsao Hsien, Shantung; H. Eckblad from the Swedish Alliance Mission in Kueisui; and a Chinese evangelist, Mr. Li; proclaimed the Word.

Whenever a congregation became financially able, they were expected to erect their own church building and dwellings for their evangelists. On the Inner Mongolian Mission field only the main station, Chotzeshan, and the village of Tu Mu Erh Tai, had church buildings owned by the conference. The other congregations met in rented or leased buildings, remodeled into chapels or dwellings, and financed by the local group. As the work grew and continued, the missionaries realized that if China was to be evangelized, it would have to be done through the nationals. By 1926 five evangelists, three colporteurs, and two Bible women were engaged to help in the work.

The main station, Chotzeshan, and the larger outstations: Taolin, Chi Hsia Ying, Wu Lan Hua, and Tu Mu Erh Tai, were staffed with national evangelists and workers. To supplement these permanent workers, traveling evangelists, colporteurs, and Bible women, together with the foreign missionaries, went from village to village to share the gospel with interested persons. Throughout the summer months, particularly during the Chinese New Year season, opportunities for special evangelistic meetings opened in different churches. After the initial days of the Chinese New Year celebration, the Chinese welcomed callers, or took time to go where the gospel was being preached. The interested inquirer was given further instruction in the basic teachings of Christ. Considerable emphasis was placed on the Gospel of John, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. The inquirer was also familiarized with the meaning of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church membership.

As soon as there were approximately ten believers in a community, they were encouraged to organize a church. One of their number was chosen as leader until an evangelist could be supplied by the mission. A "Tung Shih Hui" or church council, elected from their own group, looked after the material and spiritual welfare of the members. During the infancy of the church the evangelist's salary was usually paid by the KMB Board of Foreign Missions. Some of the outstations were soon able to support themselves, while others found it difficult to finance the operation of a church. However, most congregations at least paid for the fuel used to heat their chapel.

Since the goal of the mission in Inner Mongolia was to train national workers to carry on the church work, a number of students were sent to the Bible school in Tientsin and to the China Inland Mission Bible School in Taiyuan, Shansi, for training.

In 1927 a school for missionary children was begun. Each morning Anna Klassen taught the six pupils, reserving the afternoon for her own language study. The pupils, Harold, Rachel, Elizabeth, and Franklin Wiebe together with Homer and Joy Ratzlaff, made good progress.

As the population of foreigners on the mission station increased, it became necessary to augment the small herd of milk cows. The foreigners practically lived on dairy products, whereas the Chinese did not use them. To find a good milk producer Wiebe made a three-day journey into Mongolian territory. After buying a cow, together with his native helper, he set out to lead the animal to Chotzeshan. On the second day the cow lay down, refusing to go any farther. All urging and prodding was in vain. In frustration Wiebe prayed about the matter, and the cow sprang to her feet and ran to the first village. There the people welcomed the newcomers and their precious possession for the night. The next day the cow cooperated and they were able to bring her safely to Chotzeshan.

Clothing was something that missionaries always needed, especially those families with many growing active children. Mrs. Wiebe particularly welcomed a package of clothes that arrived from a mission circle in Kansas, for everything in it was suitable and useful. Several pairs of shoes came from another source. The brown pair fitted both Elizabeth and her younger brother, who both shed many tears trying to decide who would get to wear them. Finally the decision was made to take turns

wearing them on Sundays. Usually the children wore Chinese cloth shoes; however, those did not last long, particularly on active boys.

When the mission was opened in 1923, there were no schools in Chotzeshan. In 1925 a lower elementary school opened, enrolling boys from six to 12 years old, and then, a year later, girls of the same age. In 1940 the only mission-supported school on the field reported an enrollment of 70 pupils with a teaching staff of three.

The courses, with Bible as the main subject, deviated somewhat from the curriculum of government schools. Other subjects taught were reading, writing, mathematics, general science, history, and music. During the years 1937-41 Elizabeth Hofer served as instructor in Bible, with Mrs. Chang as one of the teachers and Mr. Chang as principal of the school.

The mission, not able to finance or staff a high school with well-prepared instructors, sent students who wanted higher education to government schools in other cities. Mission workers, since they were especially interested in those students, assisted with their tuition and board. A mutual agreement with the students stipulated that they serve the mission either as instructors or evangelists for about three years after graduation from high school. A few of these former mission students attended teacher's college, preparing themselves for teaching in the public schools.

4

Evacuation to the East Coast — 1927

The National Revolution, brought about by the collaboration of the Kuomintang (Nationalists) and the Kunchantang (Communists), lasted from 1926 to 1937. Their objective, supported by the Soviet Union with money, arms and advisors, was to unify the Republic of China, overthrow the militarists, and work for land reform. For a time the unified effort succeeded quite well and received popular support from the masses, labor unions, farmers, and students. In 1927, however, when much of South China was under their control and final victory was within their reach, the two parties became estranged. For the next 22 years they vied for support of the masses and control of the country. The Nationalists dominated much of the country until 1937, seizing control of the rich Yangtze River valley, and also controlling the industrial, financial, and commercial powers of the coastal cities.

Radical changes took place in China during the late twenties. The Shanghai Incident of May 30, 1925, and the Nanking Incident of March 24, 1927, gave rise to much concern among the missionaries. During those and other critical incidents, many of the schools, hospitals, and missionary homes suffered severe losses at the hands of soldiers. Foreigners were stripped of their clothing, women were threatened with rape and death.

In August 1926, after a year of continuous fighting, the northern army was forced to retreat. Mrs. Wiebe described their plight during the retreat of the northern army through Chotzeshan:

Up to this time we lived in relative peace and quiet. The conditions have now deteriorated to the extent that the

missionary families and the Chinese nationals are in grave danger. Large army units have begun to march through the Chotzeshan mission field. The first trainloads of soldiers were quiet and peaceful; however, when the cavalry, with their long swords, passed through, all the people were in constant danger.

General Chang Chih Chang of Feng Yue-Hsiang's army, fleeing with his troops to the west, stopped for a rest in Chotzeshan. Wiebe, assisting the general's cook, inquired about the army's plans; he replied: "*Ach ja, ich weiss es nicht*" ("Ah yes, I do not know"). The Chinese spoke German.

Marcus Ch'eng, General Feng Yue-Hsiang's nationally known evangelist, also visited the mission station at Chotzeshan. The evangelist, overcome by depression, sought refuge for himself and his family. His responsibility for the evangelization of the general's troops dwindled as the trainloads of soldiers retreated.

On one occasion Wiebe was asked to go to the train to treat a badly wounded soldier. He found a serviceman whose foot was almost severed, begging for medication to relieve the pain. Wiebe could only bind the leg with bandages, hoping it would stay in place until the soldier could be transported to the hospital in Kueisui, 60 miles west of Chotzeshan.

During the noon hour another trainload of wounded servicemen arrived in Chotzeshan and a makeshift clinic was established. Again Wiebe was called to treat the critically wounded. Those still able to walk quickly filled the clinic, demanding first aid. Many, however, were so severely wounded that the limited facilities at Chotzeshan could not help them. Of these conditions Mrs. Wiebe wrote, "One often heard the expression from the wounded, 'Oh that I were dead rather than to suffer so pitifully.' " The soldiers, wounded and ill-tempered, also demanded food. It became impossible to feed the hordes of retreating soldiers, and superior officers executed their cooks because food was not available.

One morning Wiebe, with his smaller children, went through the rear compound gate to search for a grazing field for their milk cows. Immediately they noticed three soldiers jumping over the neighbor's broken-down wall. Sensing the danger, Wiebe turned to close the gate. The soldiers, however, demanded that the gate remain unlocked, threatening to harm the children. Wiebe, without a moment's hesitation, locked the

gate and together with the children ran to the house. Safely inside, he remarked, "I was not aware children could run so fast."

During a Sunday morning worship service, the Christians earnestly prayed that the Lord would protect them from the looting soldiers. After the church service, soldiers, using large rocks, tried to break the locks on the heavy gates in the front yard, causing a great disturbance. Other soldiers managed to scale the compound wall. Soon the Wiebes heard glass breaking in the east wing of their house. Again they cried to the Lord, who was their only refuge, for protection. While breaking the glass, one soldier cut his hand and required medical attention. Wiebe, experienced in first aid, treated the injury and sent the soldier away. Approaching the other soldiers with love and understanding, the missionary and Chinese evangelist pleaded with them to refrain from destroying and looting. The soldiers, persuaded for the time being, left the compound and instead scaled the wall of a wealthy neighbor. The neighbor, accustomed to being waited on by many servants, now became the despised servant of the retreating army in his own home.

Farmers, forced to give up their grain before it was ripe, watched it being deliberately destroyed by the soldiers' horses. When the soldiers preferred to feed their animals at the railroad station, the farmers were forced to deliver feed. Everything was taken from the people: grain, clothing, and all personal possessions. The townspeople began to bring their valuables to the mission compound; a special room in the compound was reserved for that purpose. The Lord protected his work and the mission compound was not destroyed by the looters. However, additional retreating soldiers began pouring into Chotzeshan. This time there appeared no hope of dissuading them from coming into the compound. Hot water and millet soup were quickly prepared and hundreds of troops fed before they were willing to leave the front gate.

The missionaries, unable to endure many more demands, prayed and fasted according to Matthew 17:21, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." While the believers prayed in the chapel, an evangelist climbed over the wall to contact the leading army officer who had arrived at the railroad station with his special train. Because of the evangelist's insistent pleading, the general sent four watchmen to guard the mission gate.

The Western governments, fearing the safety of their people, ordered their nationals to withdraw from the interior.² Therefore, on April 6, 1927, the missionaries received a telegram from the American Consul telling them to leave for Tientsin. After much prayer and deliberation, they decided to follow the advice of the Consul. Since the trains were still running between Chotzeshan and Tientsin, they quickly completed arrangements and packed their belongings.

The regular afternoon prayer meeting was an excellent opportunity to arrange for the future work in the church without creating undue suspicion. A brother, baptized only the previous year, was chosen as leader in the absence of the missionaries, and was heartily supported by the group of believers. Four other brethren were chosen to assist him in the work of the church.

A discussion followed regarding the safekeeping of the missionaries' belongings which could not be taken with them. The room used for kindling, which had no windows or doors to the outside, seemed the best place. The window and door that opened into the workshop could easily be closed with bricks without leaving a trace of any opening. That evening bedding, household effects, and equipment were packed into the room before the window and door were plastered shut. Suitcases, trunks, and boxes, which they took with them, were packed the next morning.

The Peter Ratzlaff family, who were due for a well-earned furlough, packed with that thought in mind. Anna Klassen, who had only recently unpacked her trunks, now packed again to join the flight to the East Coast. In spite of many visitors who came to bid the missionaries farewell, everything was packed by the time the train arrived at 7 p.m., April 7, 1927. Fearing that the train might not be equipped with lights, the missionaries took a kerosene lantern along. Soon the train began moving and by the light of the lantern the missionaries ate their picnic lunch. Then, because there were no benches or berths, they spread blankets on the floor and spent a long restless night. After a day and a night, they were to change trains at Feng-Tai. Wary and exhausted from the trip, the Chotzeshan group decided to remain overnight in a Chinese inn, where they were able to get a hot meal.

The following morning as they boarded the early train for Tientsin, they noticed a young missionary couple with a small

baby, also boarding the train. The young mother, however, was weeping. During conversation with the father, Wiebe learned that their baby had died during the night. Since they did not want to bury the body in a strange city, they carried the baby with them on the train. Later, in Tientsin, the group gave the infant a Christian burial.

Tientsin, already crowded with refugees, had little housing available for a large family. While the families, together with Anna Klassen and Margaret Thiessen, remained in the military compound, the men searched for living quarters. As evening drew near the soldiers helped the missionary families, still without a place to stay for the night. They made two rooms in their barracks available until something more convenient could be located.

A wealthy British bachelor permitted the refugees to move into two of three large mansions he owned. The mansions, unoccupied for a number of years, needed thorough cleaning. The floors, carpeted with a thick layer of dust, bore the imprint of the inspecting tenant. The Chotzeshan missionaries were fortunate in acquiring three rooms: one for the Ratzlaff family, the second for the single women and the older Wiebe girls, and the third room for the Wiebes and their smaller children. All were grateful to the Lord for the housing and the warm spring weather which kept the families comfortable. A few essential pieces of furniture were provided, though a number of persons still had to sleep on the floor. Because none of the cookstoves were serviceable, they purchased a one-burner oil stove for \$1.50 which served the family quite well.

On May 14, 1927, after their arrival in Tientsin, the Wiebe twins, David and Dwight, were born. The following headline appeared on the front page of the *North China Star Daily*: "Missionary Refugee Mother of Twin Sons Born Here in Wellington Nursing Home." Missionaries and friends graciously helped to defray the hospital cost, and insisted Mrs. Wiebe take a complete rest. Until this time she had been sleeping on the floor, but now a soft hospital bed was prepared for her. Mrs. Wiebe wrote, "I was very grateful for the wonderful rest provided by the Lord."

Soon after arriving in Tientsin the missionaries began corresponding with the Christians in Chotzeshan, who at the time of parting had felt like forsaken and helpless orphans. In June the Chinese brethren responded: "Our meetings are well-

attended and the Holy Spirit continues to work." They added that Mr. and Mrs. Yen were continuing the school work without interruption.

The intense heat and humidity in Tientsin during the month of July was very depressing for children as well as adults. Peitaiho, on the coast, was only several hours from Tientsin by train, and many foreigners went there in summer to escape the heat and polluted city air. Bible and missionary conferences were held at this resort, which added to the Wiebes' desire to go; yet they held back because house-rent would be twice as high in Peitaiho as in Tientsin. Their finances were meager. They turned again to Psalm 37:5, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." God answered. Mr. and Mrs. Richard T. Evans, a wealthy American family, after hearing about the Wiebes, offered them two furnished cottages in Peitaiho, rent free. The offer was gratefully accepted.

Many valuable friendships were formed at Peitaiho, including the Jonathan Goforths, who had come to China in 1888, and the Taylors, son of the late Hudson Taylor. These new acquaintances, and the prayer meetings and Bible conferences inspired the Wiebes for their work. A large American battleship, lying in the Chinhuangtao harbor near Peitaiho with about two hundred seamen on board, provided opportunity for service. On Saturdays the missionaries usually invited several men to share a meal to get acquainted. On Sundays Wiebe went aboard the ship, witnessing to the men of the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

When the Wiebes indicated their desire to return to Chotzeshan, the American Consul warned that travel into the interior was still too dangerous. It was also rumored that the United States government would request citizens to return to their homeland if they would not cooperate. Wiebe, however, was granted permission to visit the mission station by himself. Having been warned of the bandits and dissident soldiers along the railroad, he settled his family in Peking and prepared for the journey. The weather was extremely cold, and since his winter clothes were still stored in the mission home, Wiebe was grateful for the friends who lent him some warm clothing. At the depot Wiebe discovered that the train, leaving for Mongolia only three times a week, was packed to capacity. Large numbers of soldiers guarded the cars to prevent any incident.

Wiebe took comfort from Psalm 145:18, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." On Monday, December 13, 1927, he was able to leave the Peking station for Chotzeshan. Traveling was slow and hazardous since the tracks had been badly damaged during the war. Broken windows, doors, and benches gave vivid evidence that the long war had taken its toll. The huge locomotive broke down six times on the way to Chotzeshan and waiting for repairs was not always pleasant. Fortunately, Wiebe had taken enough food along to last the entire trip.

Arriving late and unexpectedly at the mission station, Wiebe received a warm welcome from the brethren, who had suffered unspeakable hardship at the hands of the bandits and retreating soldiers. Most of their clothing and movable property had been taken from them. Their new-found faith, although severely tried by the immoral and atrocious acts of the enemy, remained deeply rooted.

In July 1929, after Wiebe's return to Peking, the American Consul gave permission to the missionaries to travel as far as Kalgan, about one-third the distance from Peking to Chotzeshan. Assuring Wiebe there would be sufficient room in the cars for the missionaries and their baggage, the train officials suggested they be at the depot by six o'clock in the morning: the train was due at nine-thirty.

To their dismay, the train consisted of only three open freight cars with no seats or accommodations, only a filthy floor to sit on.

Thankful for the cloud-darkened sky which would serve as an umbrella from the heat of the July sun, they found a broom, swept one part of the floor of the open car and reserved a corner for themselves, using their hand baggage to sit on. They felt fortunate to have enough room to be relatively comfortable.

According to the schedule, the train first made a round trip of about fifty miles toward the east outside of Peking and then stopped again at the main station to pick up passengers for the journey west. The women and children took this extra ride so they would not lose their places in the car. On their return to the main station the mob waiting to board the train began filling all the cars, including the corner the foreigners had reserved so carefully. Mrs. Wiebe, concerned how she could care for the twins properly in those cramped conditions, was told simply, "Yes, that is true, but each one has to look out for himself."

Before the train left the station another open car, which had carried lime, was coupled to the train and the group quickly climbed over the sides into the roomy car. Even though some of the other passengers followed them, they still had sufficient space for themselves.

The children enjoyed riding in an open car where they could see much of the countryside. On this route the train passed through four tunnels in the high mountains. Through the first three the locomotive pushed the cars uphill; for the fourth and longest tunnel the locomotive was switched to pull the cars. Suddenly all the steam, heat, smoke, and gas fumes from the engine enveloped the passengers. The heat, so intense the passengers feared it would ignite the flammable articles in the cars, caused the children to cry loudly. When the children's cries dwindled to whimpers, the parents feared they had succumbed to the gas fumes. Just when the peril seemed greatest the engineer shut off the steam and heat. Immediate relief came as they broke into daylight at the end of the tunnel. Mother Wiebe's first concern was, "Are the twins alive?" Yes, they were still breathing. However, all the children, as a result of inhaling the gas fumes, were soon fast asleep. They had only partially recovered from the tunnel episode when a heavy rain cloud emptied itself on them. For two hours it rained. Three umbrellas, hardly adequate for 12 persons, provided little protection from the rain.

When they arrived in Kalgan at eleven o'clock, the threat of rain continued, so they decided to remain in the railroad station until morning. One of the local officials graciously let them use a small room which contained a narrow plank bed. Here some of the children slept while the others sat on their baggage bundles and dozed until morning. In the early morning hours they located the Methodist Protestant Mission, where they enjoyed a hot breakfast.

On July 29 they were granted permission to continue to Chotzeshan and immediately prepared for their homeward journey. But before they were ready to leave it began to rain. The floodwaters rose, forcing the group to remain at the mission station until morning. Then, once again sitting on their baggage in the mail car, they thanked God for shelter from threatening rain and heat of the sun.

In a Chinese inn in Tatung they were given a dingy room with a large brick bed, yet it was a welcome change for the

weary travelers. The ten-hour trip home to Chotzeshan the next morning on an open coal car, the only available transportation, was made without serious incident. Many of the native Christians were at the railroad station to greet them. The reception, contrasted to their arrival five years ago, was encouraging. Wiebe wrote: "Outwardly we found everything about the way we left it last Spring. The mission buildings were in good order and the things in the mission homes were the same as we had left them. I was amazed and silently thanked God wherever I went to see how well the brethren had managed."

5

Post-Evacuation Labors

Much work awaited the missionaries on their return to the Chotzeshan mission field. In anticipation of the missionaries' return from the East Coast the Chinese Christians had delayed many important decisions. A Thanksgiving and Love Feast, held on August 12, became the occasion for the brethren to fellowship and seek the counsel of the missionaries. During a series of revival meetings, conducted in December, believers repented of sins that had crept into their lives during the missionaries' absence. The Holy Spirit also moved sinners to repentance and some of these were later baptized and taken into the church. Many who a few years ago had worshiped Buddha, now sang praises to the living God.

The missionaries sensed that not only spiritual and medical needs but also poverty was greater than before. Robbers had taken clothing, bedding, and the few household articles the people had owned. Because of this lack of proper clothing, the extremely cold weather became unbearable, especially among the poorer people. Moreover, lack of rain during the growing season had dried the soil so that the grain could not ripen, and later hailstorms destroyed what was left. The people, left with land but no food, seemed without hope.

One day the Wiebes, together with two Chinese brethren, went house calling. Their first stop was at a home built in the form of a cave; the badly damaged door stood ajar. Greeted by a 13-year-old boy and a two-year-old girl, they learned that the mother had died recently and the father had left eight days before to seek help from relatives. The room was without heat and the children had no food. After giving the children some assistance the party visited the next home. Here a couple with a

six-year-old son lived in a hole dug into the side of the hill with only one opening and no conveniences. The missionaries provided for their physical needs before directing them to the Christ who loved them. On their return to the mission station they stopped at the home of a Christian woman and her two sons. They noted that she had some flour in her crock and a warm blanket to cover herself at night. As a rule Christians seemed to fare somewhat better than their unsaved neighbors; moreover, their homes were usually quite tidy.

The mission continued to help as needed, usually assisting with flour and a warm blanket. Often hunger was so intense that a husband would feel pressed to sell his wife and children. A native Bible woman, on one of her visits to a village, found a young, poorly-clad widow living in a cave. The Chinese Bible woman took her to her own home, gave her food, washed her and since no other blanket was available, slept under the same one with the poor woman.

An elderly mother, preparing her jacket for the cold winter found that the cotton was too matted and soiled from many years of continued use to make a warm jacket. When a missionary gave her a small bundle of new cotton to supplement the old, she burst into tears and said, "If you had not graciously given me the cotton, I would have frozen to death during the long winter months."

Those who were able to do manual labor were given work to earn food. One task was to carry rocks on a back-rack from a nearby mountain for the foundation of the planned church building. These laborers were given some millet and required to attend the worship services.

These people who had experienced hunger, sickness, and near death, as well as the loss of their possessions, were now very receptive to the gospel. Perhaps never in the history of the mission had the missionaries experienced such responsiveness.

Because the work at the Chotzeshan station demanded much of the missionary's time, Wiebe had not yet been able to visit the northern station. So, together with his son Harold, he set out to visit Taolin, 30 miles north of Chotzeshan. They traveled over rugged mountains and through cold streams. Their bicycles, with heavy baggage and books, had to be led most of the way to avoid the jagged rocks. Riding downgrade, though more comfortable for the weary traveler, had to be done with real caution to avoid generating hazardous speeds. The

last ten miles led through rich wheat, oat and rye fields. Overflow crowds greeted them at the Taolin mission station. The Wangs, stationed at Taolin, had enjoyed God's protecting care during the bandit invasion and were courageously performing their duties.

The schooling of missionary children, sometimes many, sometimes fewer, was often cause for concern. Although qualified to teach, the missionaries felt they had been called to the mission field primarily to preach the gospel. For some time Anna Klassen taught the missionary children. However, she was a registered nurse and could hardly be spared since there was no doctor in the community. During the evacuation the Wiebes had become acquainted with the R. T. Evans family, who lived in Tientsin. At that time Mrs. Evans offered to teach the three oldest Wiebe children in her home. (Grace had already returned to America, where she was enrolled as a student at Tabor College.) Now, after the missionaries' return to the Mongolian mission, the Evans' again invited Harold, Rachel, and Elizabeth to return to Tientsin to continue their education.

Even in the work of missions, tragedies that cause fear and soul-searching are permitted to happen. In Liang Cheng, just south of the Chotzeshan station, missionary Bloomdahl was conducting revival meetings in one of the villages. At night he fell into the hands of robbers, who robbed and brutally murdered him. Bloomdahl, a faithful brother in the Lord, loved the Chinese dearly and paid the supreme sacrifice for the cause of Christ. His death, of course, meant that the widow and son were left alone in a strange land. For wife and son it was perplexing to lose their loved one while engaged in the high calling of the Lord's work. Later Mrs. Bloomdahl's father, missionary Hill, fell victim to the dreaded typhus fever which is transmitted by lice. Several of the Hills' coworkers also died of the disease. Young missionaries from the homeland, however, came to fill the gaps created by the fallen heroes.

There were also times when missionaries felt very much alone and needed the fellowship of other mission workers. The Wiebes, who had the goodwill of their coworkers, considered it advisable to leave the work for a brief respite. They accepted a long-standing invitation from the Kueisui Swedish Alliance mission, their neighbors to the west of Chotzeshan, who had worked on that field for 30 years. The Wiebes enjoyed the time spent with these missionaries but were vividly reminded of the

previous tragedies in Kueisui when they were shown the graves of 38 missionaries and children. All were victims of the brutal Boxer Rebellion or of typhus fever. Even as the Wiebes felt compassion toward the people who had suffered at Kueisui, the Swedish Alliance missionaries became sensitive to the starving people in Chotzeshan and donated \$250 to help feed and clothe the poor. After this short time of physical diversion and spiritual refreshment with the missionaries in Kueisui, the Wiebe family returned to their work in Chotzeshan with renewed vigor.

One day the evening was far spent, the children already asleep, when an evangelist with a companion knocked at the front door. (In Chinese tradition a person usually did not knock at a door, but would call, cough, or even hum a tune to announce his arrival.) Wiebe, answering the knock, was asked by the two men to step outside. They informed him that the general of the local troops had advised all missionaries to flee because Chotzeshan was surrounded by bandits. Moreover, the troops, not strong enough to repulse the invaders, could not prevent the bandits from looting, burning villages, and murdering at random. Fortunately, late in the afternoon of the following day a train could be taken to Kueisui. The Wiebes fled, reaching Kueisui about nine o'clock in the evening. A slow moving oxcart transported them from the railway station to the Swedish Alliance mission, a distance of about five miles. One of the mission homes, void of all furniture, provided a place to stay. Wiebe and Harold went in search of straw for mattresses. Two days later Richard was born. Years later his mother wrote: "From all these hardships our son learned in his early years that missionaries must deprive themselves of many conveniences on the mission field." After several days in Kueisui, Harold and Franklin returned to Chotzeshan to check on the mission property. In another 12 days the remaining family and mission workers also returned and found the mission property undamaged. Shortly thereafter many became ill with the flu, which usually attacked the lungs of the patient severely. Little David, the more fragile twin, became ill and the complications which set in took his short life.

For some time the missionaries felt constrained to work with the Mongolian village people scattered among the Chinese villages; at this time, however, there was little hope for integration. To persuade the Mongolians to attend meetings

and to fellowship with the Chinese believers was difficult. However, among those baptized during the summer of 1931 was a Chinese businessman with a fairly good command of the Mongolian language. The mission sent Tang to live among the Mongolians. As far as is known only one Mongol was baptized, and he did not carry on a Christian witness.

With the work well established, the Wiebes prepared to return to their homeland. Ten years of labor had been crowned with a host of believers. All the outstations were well represented at the last festival of dedication and baptism. On Friday, 45 candidates were examined for baptism. Of these, 40 were accepted; the rest were to receive further instruction in the main doctrines of the Scriptures.

On Sunday the new brick church, which had been in the planning stage for a long time, was dedicated for divine worship. All the evangelists were given an opportunity to speak on the subject of dedication, and to participate in the dedicatory prayer. After a fellowship meal the congregation met for the ordination of four brethren. Wang and Yang were ordained as elders and Chen and Liang as deacons. The first three brethren served as pastors and evangelists at Chotzeshan and Taolin, and Liang served as overseer of the poor homes. On



Chen family — evangelist on main station.



Yang family — elder on main station.

Monday morning the people witnessed 40 candidates enter the waters of baptism, and in the afternoon 150 members participated in Holy Communion and footwashing. Only ten years earlier there had been no Christian witness.

The Wiebes returned to the homeland in 1931, first living in Hillsboro, Kansas, and later settling on a farm near Hillsboro. There Wiebe, active in wheat farming, served the Gnadenau KMB church for ten years. After retirement from the farm, the Wiebes devoted five years to pioneer work in Ponca, Arkansas. During their many years of service in China the Wiebes had engaged in a variety of activities such as preaching, teaching, nursing, clinical work, house visitation, and personal work.

On April 28, 1951, Rev. Frank V. Wiebe went to be with the Lord. Engraved on his tombstone in the Gnadenau cemetery are the words, "He that winneth souls is wise." Mrs. Wiebe, continuing the ministry, served three years as assistant administrator for the Home of the Aged, Hillsboro. In 1976 the Lord called her to her reward.

6

Interim Ministry

Mr. and Mrs. John S. Dick of the Mennonite Brethren Mission in Shanghang, South China, were invited by the KMB Mission Board to serve as interim missionaries on the Mongolian field after the Wiebes returned to the U.S. The Dicks, taking charge of the field in the fall of 1931, served faithfully for the next three years and nine months.

Although the Dicks had lived in China for many years, the culture and environment of Inner Mongolia was much different from that of South China, where their mission work had been located. The winter climate was severe and required adaptation to sub-zero weather. However, summer weather at this five thousand foot elevation was delightful and invigorating in contrast to the heat in the South, which always drained much of the vitality so essential for mission work. A factor, however, that occasionally caused frustration, and at times embarrassment, was the language. Since the spoken language of South China was very different from the Chinese spoken in Inner Mongolia, the Dicks had to relearn the language.

In many ways the Northern Chinese, quite different from the Southerners who had heard about Christianity before, lived in spiritual darkness. In Inner Mongolia large areas had never heard the gospel proclaimed. In order to spread the gospel from the main station, outstations were established in the surrounding territory. An outstation was a preaching center with an evangelist responsible for the people within a five-mile radius. Such a small area may appear to be inadequate territory for a full-time evangelist, but like the Apostle Paul and the early church workers, these Chinese evangelists had to travel largely on foot. The terrain was hilly, and roads were few and poor, making even a bicycle impractical in many areas.



The John S. Dicks with Tina Kornelson (standing, left) and Helen Heppner.

The evangelists and colporteurs sent to the villages and towns to preach the gospel held their meetings on the streets where the masses gathered. Their efforts were not always successful. In 1932 Dick reported:

Two Chinese brethren were sent to a large Mongolian village where the Gospel had not yet been preached. This village, Si Ta Wang, was about forty miles north of Tu Mu Erh Tai and about one hundred thirty miles northeast of Chotzeshan. The Mongolian prince, living in that village, would not give them permission to preach, and consequently that work never materialized.

However, Dick did open another outstation, Chi Hsia Ying, located 30 miles west of Chotzeshan on the Peking Suiyuan railroad. Chi Hsia Ying, a trading center for villages in the hinterland, grew very rapidly. During the winter months hundreds of oxcarts laden with sacks of grain converged on the Chi Hsia Ying market.

Since the village had no established work, Dick and his evangelists investigated the opportunity to open a place of witness there. Two years earlier the Swedish Alliance Mission had conducted tent meetings in the area, and, later, the Chotzeshan Evangelistic Team had held meetings in the same

region; these two incidents were the only Christian witness this village had heard.

Evangelists Li and Ho, together with Anna Klassen and Elizabeth Hofer, accepted the assignment of the Chi Hsia Ying field. To begin the work, groups met in the homes of those who expressed interest in the gospel. As the work progressed a small chapel was rented. Anna Klassen treated the sick and Elizabeth Hofer ministered to the women and children, while evangelists Li and Ho ministered to the flock of believers, which included Mr. Liu, a retired teacher, who was the first convert in the area, and former Confucius scholars, businessmen, and railroad workers.

At the time Dick took over the administrative responsibilities of the Inner Mongolian mission the political unrest in China made it imperative that the church become indigenous. The mission work begun by the missionaries with the assistance of the nationals could not continue indefinitely; the church would need to become self-supporting. The factors paving the way were threefold: one was the comparative peace in Inner Mongolia at this time. For years the retreating armies and bandits had preyed upon the poor people, looting their personal property and often driving them from their homes and reducing them to beggar status. During the early thirties travel in the open country became safe again and village life returned to normal. A second factor was the improved economic conditions. Unemployment was down; those who wished to work could find employment. Moreover, the crops were excellent, evidenced by the beautiful bundles of wheat hauled to the threshing-floors. Further, the believers were growing into maturity. The Christians tithed, paid the rent for the chapels, and in most cases took care of the winter's fuel needs. Moreover, the returning spirit of nationalism gave rise to opposition to foreign leadership. In the *29th Yearbook of the KMB Conference*, Dick reported, "During the past years fundamental changes have come to pass which have made profound spiritual and intellectual impressions upon the believers and the public as a whole. . . . The many years of drought and famine have slowly changed into fruitful years. The crops are very promising and the laborer has sufficient work. Whereas in the past years hunger and death had been a constant threat, now they see a future of hope."

A second fundamental change had come about among the



Elizabeth Hofer



**Li family, evangelist in
Chi Hsia Ying.**

believers, he said. "Until recently the mother church in America had provided full financial support for the Mongolian mission churches. Since the depression in America, however, funds for foreign mission work has slowed down considerably. This fact has strengthened the need for an indigenous church. The native brethren are becoming more aware of the fact that the local church must become self-supporting." The Dicks rejoiced in the growth of the believers. With the slackening of mission giving, however, had come a reduction in the visible growth of the indigenous church. No baptisms had been conducted in Chotzeshan during the year, although three persons had been baptized in Taolin. (It should be noted here that none of the KMB churches ever became completely self-supporting.)

The first week in July of 1934 brought rain; the Chotzeshan community experienced four cloudbursts in one week. The missionaries and the nationals, not fully aware of the danger that threatened the whole area, appreciated the restraining hand of God only after floodwaters had subsided. On the north

end of the mission compound a river bypassed Dragon Mountain on its south side. During the "famine relief work" period a drainage canal had been dug to accommodate floodwaters and save the mission compound from complete inundation. In times of normal rainfall the canal had been adequate. This time, however, not even the canal could hold and carry away the waters. The floodwaters reached the high walls that surrounded the mission compound and threatened the rock and mud-brick structure.

Until this time the mission personnel were still on dry ground. During the latter part of the week an extremely heavy downpour caused torrents of water to rush by both sides of the compound, surrounding the place with two to four feet of water. Water seeped through small cracks in the walls of the mission, while the walls of the neighborhood homes crumbled, adding to the strain on the mission compound walls. Neighbors, knee-deep in water, carried their meager belongings into the mission church, which was still on dry ground. One neighbor, trying to save his dishes, accidentally dropped them on the brick floor in the church — only fragments remained. As the rising water entered the mission compound, the missionaries carried in their most valuable possessions.

Due to the flooding, trains were at a standstill in Chotzeshan, and the mail bags, brought from the trains, also found a storage place in the church. With tensions mounting and waters rising, women became frustrated, some even hysterical, and children screamed.

At the time of worst danger every able-bodied person, under the leadership of Elder Yang, dug drainage ditches. Those unable to help physically were called to prayer. Determined to control the floodwaters, those handling the shovels renewed their efforts with the result that Dick became ill with a severe case of lumbago. Due to the severity of the circumstances after a short rest, he returned and began to shovel once more, supported by a cane. Eventually the floodwaters receded. The people, weary from work and fear, met in the church under the leadership of evangelist Chen for a praise service.

7

Introduction to the Work

On September 4, 1934, Mrs. Wiens and I, together with our son Victor, left San Francisco on the Chichibu Maru for China. As the last strains of "God Will Take Care of You" faded away, we passed under the Golden Gate bridge and felt the groundswells of the wide sea. Parting from friends was not our only unpleasant experience! In Kobe, Japan, thankful to be in Miss Santee's missionary rest home instead of aboard ship, we experienced a typhoon. Later, in a letter from my father, John A. Wiens, we learned that at about the time of the typhoon, he had awakened and been impelled to pray for the safety of his son and family. As the farewell song had clearly stated, God did take care of us. The ship, however, was damaged while it docked in the Kobe harbor.

What a joy to see John S. Dick on the pier in Tang Ku harbor, China! We arrived by train the following afternoon in Peking, where we remained a day to transact business. On September 28, 1934, at 11 a.m. we arrived in Chotzeshan in time to enjoy a delicious meal in the Dick home. Later, in the afternoon, the Chinese Christians gave us a reception in the church. Although unable to understand what was said, we felt a bond of love with them.

Our first encounter with the culture was traveling together with the Dick family on a horsecart to Bethany, an outstation close to Chotzeshan. On this beautiful autumn day the countryside buzzed with activity: farmers were hauling home carts stacked high with sheaves of golden grain, and villagers were on their way to the market with their produce.

When we arrived at Bethany in the early afternoon, evangelist Chu served us refreshments. The Chinese, who have a unique gift of making guests feel at home in a strange land,

invited us to sit on the *kang* (brick bed). The cross-legged posture, however, resulted in aching bones and muscle spasms, cramping limbs not trained to bend at will. The food, cooked in hemp oil, was known to cause acute indigestion in stomachs not conditioned to eat it. We decided therefore, that whenever the host turned his back, we would transfer food to Dick's plate or slip it into his large coat pockets. By the time the meal was finished, Dick's coat pockets bulged with food that otherwise might have played havoc with our digestive systems. The unsuspecting host, satisfied that he had served well, had initiated the newcomers into his culture.

While the Dicks and Sara Heinrichs continued to discharge the functions of the mission, we studied the Chinese language. Miss Tsao, a third generation Christian, helped bridge the language and cultural gaps. When we Americans arranged the furniture, we placed our best chair near the outside door. This chair, naturally offered to guests, offended the Chinese. "In China," our teacher explained, "to seat a guest near the outside door means that the host wishes him to depart soon."

As we stumbled through our first prayers, sermonettes, and songs, they were examined and reviewed by our teacher. Miss Tsao continually encouraged us to keep aiming for clarity. To master the Chinese language, however, did not become our goal; we only wished to learn it well enough to be understood by the Chinese.

Only a few weeks after arriving in Chotzeshan, Dick, Victor and I took an afternoon walk through the main street of town. In a vacant lot we noticed an active crowd of people slaughtering an animal. The gentleman selling portions of meat to bystanders told us: "I brought my sick horse to the veterinarian for treatment but while there the animal died." Consequently, portions were being sold to passersby at a reasonable price. The three Americans passed up the offer.

The education of our son, Victor, ready for the eighth grade, became our foremost concern. Before leaving the United States we had made arrangements with the school superintendent of Tulare County, California, to accept Victor's grades after he finished the year under my tutorship. For nine months I supervised Victor's studies and the next fall my wife did her best to teach the subjects of his first year of high school. Lack of finances prevented us from sending him to a boarding school.

With the work on the mission station continually mount-

ing, time for tutoring Victor became more and more curtailed. As a result of our systematic tithing Victor was able to attend the Pyeng Yang American School in Pyeng Yang, North Korea, graduating after three and a half years.

Before returning to the States for their furlough, the Dicks wanted to visit the northern outstations once more to encourage the brethren in the faith. A number of believers helped the Dicks to acquire a horse and cart to drive to Taolin. Mrs. Dick, together with the children, rode the cart, while Dick and a few brethren rode alongside on their bicycles. The springless cart managed to hit most of the small and large rocks on the bumpy and rugged dirt road. Covered with a layer of red dust and feeling the severe punishment of the unending jolts, the family arrived in Taolin towards evening. Here they participated in ordaining the first deacons chosen at Taolin. After the services, the Chotzeshan party separated: Dick and the Chinese brethren turned northeast to Tu Mu Erh Tai, and Mrs. Dick and the children boarded a cart for Pingtichuan, a distance of 40 miles. After visiting with the missionaries of the Hephzibah Faith Mission, Mrs. Dick and the children returned by train to Chotzeshan.

The bicycle trip to Tu Mu Erh Tai, a distance of 55 miles, mainly downgrade, took six and a half hours of steady peddling. While here Dick conducted three services a day and observed the Holy Communion with 14 believers. The homeward trip via Taolin, mostly uphill with a strong icy headwind, forced the riders to walk, leading their bicycles. A Mongolian duststorm came up, filling the air with red dust and adding to their discomfort. After traveling 20 miles, following a telegraph line so they would not lose their way, the exhausted group decided to stay at the next village. The shepherds at the Mongolian village invited the strangers to stay overnight, providing them with a *yurt* (a tent of felt and animal skins). Sitting around an open fire of cow and sheep dung they told the Mongolians about the gospel. In the morning, with the cold wind still blowing, the party continued to Taolin. Most of the men, who were carrying about 20 pounds of baggage, developed blisters on their feet. Dick also had the misfortune to sprain his ankle and limped the last ten miles into Taolin. After a good night's rest in Taolin, the men chose to travel southeast to Pingtichuan, ten miles farther, but mostly downgrade with a favorable wind. They crossed a number of rivers, and Dick,



Mongols and "yurt," a tent made with animal skins.

twice, got a chilly footbath when he broke through the ice.

For nine months we shared a house with the Dicks, eating at the same table and having morning and evening devotions together. The valuable instruction Dick liberally shared with us new missionaries was applied later when we assumed the administration. At the breakfast table, Dick, a prolific reader, related the autobiography of Peter Cartwright which he was reading, much to the delight of the children. One morning he introduced the subject of demon possession. When we voiced a note of skepticism, he just said, "You will see." Before long we, too, witnessed the power of Satan on man. On the outstation of Chi Hsia Ying the son of a Confucian scholar was plagued by an evil spirit. Evangelist Li, warning the missionaries not to argue nor to threaten the evil spirit, prayed over the demon-possessed person. The evil spirit, after throwing the victim to the floor, reluctantly departed. Later this young man was baptized and received into the church.

One morning evangelist Chen informed Dick and me that a woman possessed by an evil spirit was waiting in the guest room for release from bondage and sin. When we entered the room, the demon addressed us. Although we did not know the woman, the demon seemed to know us. The woman, the wife of a local tailor, was illiterate and yet the voice that spoke was one of a knowledgeable individual. Evangelist Chen asked the

woman, "Do you believe that Christ is the Son of God?" The answer was in the affirmative. The next question was "Do you believe that Christ's blood can wash away sin?" The demons, afraid of the blood of Christ, would not permit an answer. While everyone in the room prayed, the evangelist commanded the demon, in the name of Christ, to leave the body of the poor woman. The evil spirit tormented the woman, but soon left. The woman, restored to health, lived a normal life.

These new believers needed to be established in Christian disciplines. Before receiving Christ as Savior they had been adherents of Buddha and the ethical teachings of Confucius. Ancestral worship was practiced by most Chinese before they became believers in the God of the Scriptures. The believers were often persecuted by relatives and friends for failing to revere parents and family because they ceased to burn incense before the ancestral tablets. It was believed that the spirits of the departed dead had to be worshiped; and that if sacrifices were neglected, the spirits would become very angry. Mrs. Chu, the gateman's mother, liberated and set free by the Lord, continued to visit her godless brother. He pleaded with her to honor the dead by burning incense at the family altar. She agreed, and Satan once more molested her.

Bible conferences and revival meetings were held twice during the first nine months of 1935. Rev. Horace Williams of the Methodist mission in Kalgan, Chahar, accepted the



Laughing Buddha

invitation to conduct the annual Bible conference at Chotzes-han. The evangelists, leaders, and a good representative group from each outstation attended the meetings. Coming from far and near, all guests found accommodations at the Chotzes-han mission compound. Many traveled by train, oxcart or bicycle, while others walked long distances. Old and young enjoyed sharing, singing, and visiting. It was a little bit of heaven for them to get away from home and visit with their fellow believers. During their short Christian experience, they had learned to read the New Testament. It was a considerable accomplishment for new believers to be able to follow the minister in reading the Scriptures, and they were proud to own and read the Bible. Congregational singing was done mostly in unison to accommodate those who were unable to carry a tune by themselves.

To evaluate the spiritual and social benefits derived from Bible conferences is difficult. The older believers understood and accepted God's Word in faith. However, those who had just recently come out of Confucianism found it difficult to surrender the ethical teachings of an ancient scholar for those found in the New Testament. Spiritual lessons were not easy for them to accept and required much prayer and personal attention.

Rev. Hjalmar Eckblad, of the China Inland Mission in Kueisui, Suiyuan Province, was an experienced missionary. He had a good command of the Chinese language and was well acquainted with the customs of the local people. He was well-qualified to do the ministry of an evangelist, loved the people, and was invited to conduct the second series of meetings. Once again people from the outstations and villages attended these services, staying in the mission compound. An early morning prayer service began each day, with a Bible message in the forenoon followed by evangelistic services in the late afternoon.

The Chinese seemed to be able to concentrate better if they spoke audibly and all at the same time. For example, the school children studied their lessons aloud, each one trying to talk louder than the other. The same was true regarding their prayer sessions. The missionaries were advised that united prayer was desirable because prayer would more likely be directed to God and not to the neighbor. Whenever the leader decided the prayer service should be terminated, or if someone became

overly emotional, he would start to sing a chorus, and thus bring the prayer meeting to a close. Many decisions to follow Christ were made at these meetings. Soon thereafter we had the privilege of baptizing several converts.

At one baptism an evangelist brought three men from an outstation to be baptized. They were examined as usual, then baptized upon their faith in Christ. The next day these men were found on the street living as before. When admonished for their worldly acts, they said to the evangelist, "You paid us a dollar apiece, but that was good only through Sunday." Such was disappointing for the missionary. Only love, patience, and diligent instruction could lead these men to spiritual growth.

A Mongolian made a profession of faith. However, when he understood that baptism and affiliation with the church did not assure employment with the mission, he withdrew his commitment. Though there were a number of Mongolian villages in the area, few Mongolians accepted the Lord as Savior.

Dick, concerned that the national churches become self-supporting as soon as practical, began counseling with the individual believers. A great deal of Bible teaching was required before the concept of giving was fully accepted. Christian growth depended to some extent on spiritual perception and, frequently, upon the material goods the people possessed. The missionaries, aware of the difficulties inherent in the projected concept of self-support, hesitated suggesting the idea. National leaders could wean their flocks away from the mother church and terminate the already delicate ties not securely bound in love and understanding. Not until a tragic war gripped the country and most of the missionaries had to leave the field, did some groups become self-supporting.

Dick, interested in establishing churches wherever there was no Christian witness, focused on a village about 100 miles northeast of the main mission station, Chotzeshan. Tu Mu Erh Tai, not far from Outer Mongolia, was accessible at this time only by horsecart or bicycle. Missionaries were advised that the oxcart was the safest device to travel through the bandit-infested areas. The bandits presumed that only the wealthy traveled in a horse- or mule-drawn vehicle. Property acquired for the mission at Tu Mu Erh Tai became the site for a mud-brick church, the first witness for Christ in that northern area. Evangelist Tang and a small group of believers were the charter members.

In his last report from Chotzeshan, Dick reflected upon God's goodness and his leading during their short period of service in Inner Mongolia,

The work is strenuous, but rewarding. God gave strength that led to victory. In the immediate environment there is relative peace and quiet. . . . Robbers from the north and south came within a few miles of the mission station. The Lord, however, protected the city from harm.

Moreover the Lord has blessed the fields with sufficient rains so they produce grain in abundance. Crops have been ample so that rich and poor have their needs met. The pressing food shortage has been eased.

This short period has been a time for church expansion. Although the area of the field has been enlarged by adding two outstations, Chi Hsia Ying in the west and Tu Mu Erh Tai in the northeast, the visible spiritual growth is not yet evident. The foundation has been laid, and now the building is in progress.¹

After three years and nine months of faithful labor on an unfamiliar field the Dicks returned to the homeland to educate their children. John S. Dick went to be with the Lord in March 1942 at the Indiahoma, Oklahoma, mission field. Mrs. Dick died in June 1970 at Dinuba, California.

8

Change of Administration

Upon the retirement of the John S. Dicks from the Inner Mongolian mission field in 1935, the administrative responsibilities of the work were turned over to my wife and me, Gertrude and A. K. Wiens. Nine months of training, even under an able administrator, was hardly adequate for the important task before us. Comprehension of the Chinese language, barely adequate in spite of the assistance of Miss Tsao, a capable language teacher, caused some rather perplexing problems.

Early in our ministry when we would inquire of a worshiper whether he had understood the first brief message, he would enthusiastically answer in the affirmative. However, upon probing a little further, we found to our dismay that he had not understood the message at all. Because the national language in the north has four tones, with five in some localities, the tones can easily be confused. Depending on the tone, one might be praying in the name of a swine instead of in the name of the Lord. We realized the importance of learning the language when after speaking through an interpreter about the Lord's Prayer, we discovered he had related a Chinese myth instead.

The story is told of a missionary who instructed his cook to purchase a chicken, dress it, and prepare it for the noon meal. After some time the servant returned to inform him that it was impossible to find a suitable wife, they being either too old or too young for the missionary. Such incidents made us aware of the importance of using the correct tones. My wife had a similar experience. While speaking to a women's group, encouraged by the attentive congregation, she was under the impression that everything she said was understood. After the service the women examined the cloth in her dress, wanting to know how

much she had paid for the material, having misunderstood the entire talk. The Chinese, very patient and courteous, would introduce us as "one who knows the Scriptures well, but speaks the language poorly." To ascertain how well the hearers comprehended, we had to probe different individuals, and eventually the truth would come out.

Also the theatrical element in Chinese thought must be considered. The Occidental wanders off into the irrelevant, while the Chinese thinks in theatrical terms. If he is challenged to take the offensive, he addresses two or three persons as if he were speaking to a large crowd. In self-defense he addresses the few people who may be near the scene. He lays his case before the civil court to adjudicate. If his grievances are adjudicated to the satisfaction of the few people present, the defendant has the confidence that his good name has been unblemished. If, as often happens, the troubles are not adjusted to his satisfaction, the defendant cannot retire from the "stage" without losing "face." He must find another "stage." It must be understood that all the activity on the "stage" has nothing to do with realities.

Once Elder Yang and I approached a businessman with a reasonable request. There were the polite introductions, and the most flavorful brew of tea was served. While the pleasant aroma filled the room, warm greetings were exchanged and Yang in his careful and gracious manner presented the request. Intent on following the conversation I was quite confident that I understood every word spoken between the two men. When Yang finished, there were the usual courteous remarks and gracious bowing. Assent and still more bowing just outside the door by the manager and staff terminated the business venture. Returning to the mission station I expressed satisfaction for the favorable response to the request. Yang then politely informed me that the request had been wholly rejected. The manager had occasionally addressed the other people in the room, using theatrical terms which I had not comprehended. By making the proper adjustments, the businessman's "face" had been saved.

Another time while purchasing an article in a local clothing store, I handed the clerk a five-dollar bill. Immediately the payment was refused with the polite remark, "We are good friends and I would not think of charging the missionary for his purchase." Since we were considered friends supposedly no

Rev. And Mrs. Wiens Reported Kidnaped In China; U. S. Acts

Peiping Embassy Party Also Probes Death Of American Reportedly Evicted From Mission By Japanese While Suffering From Smallpox

(By The Associated Press)
PEIPING, Nov. 14.—Representatives of the United States Embassy here today set off on a journey to Kalgan to investigate the reported kidnaping by bandits of Mr. and Mrs. Abraham K. Wiens, a missionary couple from Dinuba, Calif.

The diplomats will also inquire into the death at Kalgan of Karl Bernhardt Olsen, American missionary of Gully, Minn., who, it was reported, had been driven from his home by Japanese troops while ill with smallpox. In addition they will gather first-hand information on reports of fighting in Suiyuan Province.

Valley Church Recalls Send-Off Fete In 1934



REV. AND MRS. A. K. WIENS AND SON, VICTOR

Letter Tells Fear Of Brigands
(McClatchy Newspapers Service)
DINUBA, (Fresno Co.), Nov. 14.—Mrs. J. H. Wiens, a distant relative of Rev. and Mrs. Abraham K. Wiens, kidnaped by Chinese bandits, today said the missionary couple wrote her several weeks ago expressing fear of the bandits.

The letter, Mrs. Wiens says, described conditions in the portion of China in which the couple were stationed as in great turmoil. Wiens is a son of Rev. and Mrs. John A. Wiens of Dinuba and came to California twenty-five years ago from Kansas. For four years he was the principal of the Grandview School in the Reedley-Dinuba district, relinquishing that post to enter the ministry.

He and Mrs. Wiens were sent to China by the conference of the Zion Mennonite Brethren Church two years ago. It was their first experience in missionary work.

With their son, Victor, the missionaries were the honored guests at a farewell reception held in the Zion Mennonite Church near Dinuba in August, 1934. They sailed for missionary duty in China from San Francisco August 28, 1934.

When the couple went to China they intended to remain ten years.

The Wiens were attached to the Mennonite Brethren Mission with headquarters in China. They were reported to have been captured by bandits and carried off to the mountains.

Olsen died at Kalgan early today. Reports received at the embassy here declared his death followed eviction by Japanese troops from his home eighty miles northwest of Kalgan.

Japanese military circles here denied knowledge of the report and at the same time called it "patently absurd."

Took Over Chapel
The embassy said it was informed Japanese military authorities northwest of Kalgan had desired for several weeks the proposed Olsen's Independent Mission for their use. Recently they took over his study chapel, refusing to permit the missionaries to conduct services for his Mennonite converts.

Shortly afterward Olsen was taken ill with smallpox. While he was lying ill within his home, next door to the confiscated chapel, Japanese officials demanded the house for military purposes, the embassy report asserted.

They forced him, despite his illness, his wife and three children to vacate the residence, the spokesman said he was informed.

Evicted, the refugee family managed to reach Kalgan where Olsen was reported to have died as a result of hardship and lack of medical attention.

Forty Americans In Area
The diplomatic officials were instructed to investigate the situation on the Suiyuan-Chiap border and if necessary to go farther into the northwest.

Approximately forty Americans, principally missionaries, are scattered throughout the northwestern area where communication systems are very poor.

1,000 TROOPS ARRIVE
KALGAN, (Hopei Province, China), Nov. 14.—(AP)—One thousand regular Japanese soldiers were reported to have arrived today at Pailingmiao, Northern Suiyuan Province.

Chinese sources declared the presence of the Japanese regulars was indicative of Japan's participation in Mongolian invasion of the northern area and projected extension of Manchoukuoan influence westward.

Invasion of Suiyuan has been reported only from Chinese sources, however, while such a movement has been denied unofficially by the Japanese.

Considerable airplane activity in Eastern Suiyuan also was declared to have been observed.

Dispatches reaching Kalgan described highways between Pailingmiao and Kweiin as blocked by large numbers of Japanese army trucks hauling supplies into the area.

Are Safe In China



REV. AND MRS. ABRAHAM K. WIENS AND SON VICTOR

Missionaries Are Safe, Dinuba Parents Happy; Priest Escapes Bandits

DINUBA (Tulare Co.), Nov. 14.—We thank God they are safe. With this fervent prayer Rev. and Mrs. John A. Wiens of the Dinuba district today received the joyful news that their son, Rev. Abraham K. Wiens, and his wife, who had been reported kidnaped by bandits in China, were safe at their mission post at T'ho Tse Shan, Suiyuan Province.

The worried father and mother heard the welcome news over The Fresno Bee Radio KMJ this morning and, relieved of their anxiety, resumed their normal trend of life that had been interrupted during the last few days while reports of the kidnaping were burning up the cables from the Far East.

Mrs. Wiens, her face wreathed in smiles, was found doing her Monday washing later in the day.

"We knew the Lord would take care of them," she said. "The Lord called them to His service and the Lord takes care of His servants."

It was not indicated in the brief dispatch from Peiping whether the missionaries had been kidnaped and released or whether the original kidnaping report was false.

Wiens, who had been principal of the first teaching post to become a missionary China for the Mennonite Church and left for his mission post two years ago with his wife and their son, Victor, who is now 16 years of age.

Yesterday a prayer service for the safety of the two missionaries was held at the Zion Mennonite Brethren Church near here. The service was largely attended by relatives and friends of the couple. It is understood young Victor is in a private school in Korea and was not with his parents at the time of their reported kidnaping by bandits.

Newspaper reports from 1936

charge was made and the businessman saved "face" by refusing my money. With the left hand, however, he took the money and returned no change.

Another of our concerns was national church leadership. Some of the brethren had the rare gift from God to pastor and conduct the affairs of the church wisely. With few exceptions the leading brethren loved the Lord and the church which they served. Supervision by the mother church was looked upon by the Chinese as an encroachment on their inalienable right as free and independent people. Many missionaries acknowledged that national leadership was far superior in both spiritual and social affairs to theirs. The missionary served chiefly as spiritual counselor and at times directed the solution of their mundane problems. As nationals, they were well-qualified to interpret mores, customs, and folkways of the people in each local village.

Another of our anxieties was the continual political unrest in China. Bandits and Communists had infiltrated the peasant country. John and Betty Stam had sacrificed their lives for the gospel during the middle thirties. Another 12 Protestant missionaries had been murdered and 59 abducted.

Early in October 1936 it was reported to the American Consul in Peking that we had been kidnapped by bandits. On Sunday morning a telegram arrived from the American Consul inquiring about our safety. Completely unaware of what was happening, we had been kept safe and unharmed. Nevertheless, the American Consul urged all American citizens to leave for safer areas. On October 16, 1936, the workers of the Inner Mongolian mission field left for Peking for a short period. An apartment adequate for our needs was made available by the hospitable missionaries living in the Methodist compound in Peking.

In 1934 the Nationalists had forced the Communists into a long march, cutting them off from essential supplies, especially salt. The march of six thousand miles led them through some of the provinces of western China and through northwestern Shensi. The toll in human lives was devastating. Of the more than ninety thousand who started on the long trek, only about twenty thousand reached Shensi and their new headquarters at Yen-an. The Nationalists wished to drive them into Outer Mongolia and thus dissipate their strength. Had the Nationalists' plans been successful, the Communist hordes would have

covered the Chotzeshan mission field.

What would happen to the Inner Mongolian mission with the Communists only a short distance south of Chotzeshan in the Provinces of Shansi and Shensi? Pockets of Communists were already much closer to the Chotzeshan field, and in desperation were looting and robbing the countryside.

On December 12 of the same year Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek was kidnapped at Sian, Shensi Province. A heavy war cloud hung over China at that time. The political foundations of Nanking were badly shaken. The whole country had become dependent upon the wise leadership of the Generalissimo. Now he was a captive.

Considerable economic progress had been made since Chiang Kai-Shek had come to power. Industrialization and foreign trade had intensified. Business flourished in the large cities and in the smaller villages. Tourist trade had reached a high mark. China's economy had improved to the extent that the silver dollar was not far below par with the United States dollar. Many of the larger cities had been provided with electric power plants. However, because of lack of repairs many of them were inoperative. Mass education was apparent nationwide. No longer were the Chinese dependent upon church mission schools for the education of the younger generation. To promote better agriculture and animal husbandry, government experimental stations had been built in Kueisui, Suiyuan Province. These were, however, in their early stages.

In the field of transportation, remarkable achievements had been made. Both passenger and freight service from Peking to Suiyuan Province had been initiated. A few all-weather roads existed close to large cities. Most of the roads in the country were still dirt or footpaths.

Chiang Kai-Shek attempted to rid his country of bandits who terrorized the countryside and to overpower the Communists, who were actively engaged in setting up a state within a state. In many areas the Communists, who owed allegiance to Russia, set up their own government and coined their own currency. Moreover, the Japanese had taken over most of Manchuria, setting up puppet governments. (During the early thirties the Japanese were not a threat to the Inner Mongolian Mission. The Japanese invasion occurred in the summer of 1937.)

Many of the older generals and soldiers of the young

Marshall Chang Hsueh-Liang, whose soldiers came from Manchuria, demanded action on the part of Chiang Kai-Shek. The Generalissimo maintained that the rebel forces had to be destroyed. Chang Hsueh-Liang sent urgent telegrams to the Generalissimo calling for action against the Japanese aggressors. The Generalissimo, however, did not reply. He maintained that as commander-in-chief of the armed forces it was his duty to work out battle strategies. While speaking at the Sian Military Academy, he affirmed that the real enemy of the nation was Communism and not Japanese aggression.

Tension was so great that the Generalissimo was compelled to fly to Sian on December 7, 1936, where the young Marshall challenged him to step up fighting against the Japanese invaders, but Chiang's only reply was that the Communists must be destroyed. On December 11 Chang Hsueh-Liang and his division commanders laid plans to fight the Japanese instead of the rebels. That night it was decided to kidnap the Generalissimo. Even though some of Chiang's bodyguards were killed while he was fleeing into the mountains, he was not harmed. While hiding in a ravine, the Generalissimo, clad in his nightclothes and without shoes, was detected by soldiers. He revealed his identity and begged the angry mob of soldiers to kill him, for he was willing to die for his country. Instead, he was returned to Sian to face Chang Hsueh-Liang, who with the division generals was responsible for the kidnapping. In prison Chiang requested a Bible and spent most of his time in captivity reading the Scriptures. One day he came upon the words, "Jehovah will do a new thing, and that is, he will make a woman protect a man."¹ Later it was through his wife's efforts that his life was saved.

From December 17 to 24 Chang Hsueh-Liang and his division generals negotiated with Chiang Kai-Shek to induce him to accept an eight-point program. In the meantime Madam Chiang, W. H. Donald, and T. V. Soong flew by plane to take part in the negotiations. All of China was badly shaken by the incident in Sian. On December 24 the Generalissimo reluctantly accepted conditions providing for the resistance of the common enemy, Japan. Further, the Generalissimo agreed to the cessation of the Civil War. Thereupon, Chiang was released by his captives on Christmas Day.

Chang Hsueh-Liang, condemned to ten years imprisonment, was pardoned by the Generalissimo. Chiang Kai-Shek

said the reason for his leniency was that he had read in his Bible how Christ on the cross had prayed, "Father, forgive them. . . ." Prompted to follow in his Master's footsteps, he gave Chang Hsueh-Liang a new start.

The Sian incident had an unsettling effect upon mission work. A number of areas were infested with rebels and Japanese armies were in the north. By December 1936, the Red Army on the "Long March" from Kiangsi to Shensi settled close to the U.S.S.R. sphere of influence. Pao An and Yen-an in Shensi were the two cities occupied by the Red Army. These movements were cause for concern on the part of the missionaries. At the time of the ominous Communist threat from the southwest, the missionaries were advised to take refuge in the coastal cities.

During the unrest, Governor Fu Tso-Yi of Suiyuan Province came to Chotzeshan with his troops. It was rather unusual for the top provincial officer to visit a mission station. After a conference with his subordinates, Governor Fu had a brief visit with the missionaries. The workers were assured that there was no need for anxiety, and that the Japanese as well as the Communists would be defeated. There was, however, no doubt in the minds of the missionaries that the movements of the enemies could become more than mere threats.

9

Traveling to Outstations

A number of ministers came to the Mongolian Mission for special meetings, among them Henry C. Bartel, founder of the China Mennonite Mission Society. He spent several weeks on the field, beginning with meetings in the Chotzeshan church. The missionary staff received valuable instruction from this veteran man of God. As the Apostle Paul was constrained to visit the churches in Asia Minor, so Bartel was urged to visit the brethren in Inner Mongolia. It was a privilege for me to travel with this seasoned missionary, learning the practical lessons that were invaluable later in the work. Bartel, with his unusual sense of humor, helped to overcome many of the difficulties and hardships of mission work. He enjoyed relating the tale of the mouse who lived in the collection plate stored in the pulpit. Only at the time of the offering did the mouse feel miserable because it had to vacate its home. But offerings were taken so seldom that the mouse felt quite comfortable.

One day Bartel stood in the front court of the mission compound, leaning against a tree smiling. Asked the reason for his smile, he answered, "Just think of all the children in China who have died in infancy; they will all be in heaven." Thus he concluded that there would be more Chinese in heaven than any other nationality. His compassion for the Chinese was so strong that often he forgot his own physical needs. To offset this the Lord endowed him with a special blessing of being able to fall asleep at any time or under any circumstance. One of Bartel's sons tells of a time in the early years of his ministry when Bartel did much walking from village to village and between mission stations. At one time, being rather weary, he fell asleep while walking and did not awaken until he bumped into a tree.

In the summer of 1936 Bartel and I set out to visit the churches of Inner Mongolia. With only primitive public transportation in that area and even nonexistent in some places, only the short distance of 50 miles to Pingtichuan could be traveled by train. The rest of the journey we covered by horsecart. However, since the roads were rough and the Chinese carts were not equipped with seats or springs, we preferred to walk. Moreover, the small pony, already pulling the heavy cart with difficulty, did not need the extra weight of two foreigners. The cart driver walked alongside the horse, riding only on the downgrades. Bartel walked the rough mountain roads like an experienced mountain climber. Upon reaching an elevation of nearly six thousand feet, we sat down on a rock to eat the lunch which had been prepared for us before we left Chotzeshan. After 12 hours of travel we arrived safely in Taolin and were cordially received by the evangelist and his family. This fur-trading center, which did much business with the Mongols, was located on a plain and surrounded by many villages. Beautiful fields of wheat and oats, ripe for harvest, looked very promising.

The meetings scheduled for the following days were well-attended. The seed of the gospel was sown. An Occidental, however, is not always accurate in the evaluation of the Oriental's perceptions. Therefore, eternity alone will reveal the true results. Also, an Oriental is distracted easily. One forenoon while Bartel preached to a full house, an airplane flew over the church premises. Immediately the whole congregation vacated the building to get a glimpse of the flying phenomenon. Bartel, an experienced and understanding missionary, leaned against the pulpit and said to me, "*De kome vada*" (they will come in again). After a few minutes most of the people returned and Bartel resumed his preaching.

The Holy Spirit worked in the lives of individuals here in Taolin. An opium addict for 30 years testified how God had delivered him from that terrible habit. Mrs. Fan, whose husband took another and much younger wife, was wonderfully saved. Mrs. Fan and her son moved to Chotzeshan, where she became a Bible woman.

From Taolin, Bartel and I, being fortunate to engage a two-mule cart with an experienced driver, began a two-day journey through Mongolian territory to Tu Mu Erh Tai. With grassland in abundance, but trees, shrubs and roads practically nonexistent, we traveled along footpaths through hills and

valleys to a Mongolian village. A Mongolian prince, together with his wives and family, had settled in this area where the grass for his cattle and sheep would be plentiful. He had gone hunting with other Mongolian men and left his family to care for the animals.

Bartel and I, resting on the *kang* in a nearby Chinese inn, noticed that the Mongolian women were busy milking cows in the open pasture. As we conversed with the women, they offered us an intoxicating beverage, which the Mongolians prepare from the whey of the milk. We declined this offer politely and asked for some milk instead. Believing the milk we were given was fresh, we satisfied our thirst. At midnight we both became ill and spent most of the night on the open grassland. Later our language teacher informed us that the Mongolians collect all the milk from cows, goats, camels, and mares in huge crocks. Apparently that was the kind of milk we had been given. The following day, as we continued our journey to Tu Mu Erh Tai, the cart driver had two sick passengers. Although he had to stop frequently for our convenience, he showed no irritation. Since we were too weak physically to walk a long distance, we sat on our baggage in the narrow cart. With Bartel's arm around my neck to make us more comfortable, we traveled along the bumpy trails, with my fellow missionary relating many interesting incidents to pass the time. Two of these stand out vividly. On their first voyage to China in 1901, the Bartels docked at the Bund in Tientsin where Mrs. Bartel was about to give birth to their first child. There being no ship doctor, Bartel disembarked to locate a doctor in the city, but couldn't find one. Returning to the ship, Bartel was unaware that the gang plank, which had no side rails, was wet; so he slipped into the water. Some swimmers rescued him from drowning. In the meantime, with the assistance of friends, Loyal was born. Since Bartel had no other clothes, he went into the hull of the ship where he found a heated coal stove to dry his clothing.

In 1905, while beginning the work in Tsao Hsien, Shantung Province, Bartel contracted typhoid fever. Fearing he would succumb to the disease, he asked Jonathan Schrag to pray for him. With no doctor in the area, his fellow missionaries united in prayer for him. After prayer Schrag took Bartel by the hand and in the name of the Lord commanded him to rise from his bed. Though feeling dizzy, Bartel slowly rose from his bed and

gradually regained strength. Bartel later commented to me, "Satan tried to drown me upon our arrival in China and when that was unsuccessful he attempted to take my life by sending this dreaded disease. Since Satan failed in these two instances, he has not tried anything after that."

In Tu Mu Erh Tai we were given lodging in a poorly lighted guestroom. While resting on the *kang* Bartel commented thoughtfully, "I am glad the Lord did not call me to do mission work in Mongolia." The meetings, well attended, witnessed the power of the Spirit as he added some believers to the body of Christ. The converts, however, were Chinese and not Mongolians.

The return trip with heavy rains, over muddy roads and swollen streams, became quite unpleasant. However, these conditions caused longer stops at roadside inns and gave us opportunity to witness of the Lord's love and saving grace. It cannot be said that many believed, but the Word was sown faithfully. After a long, wearisome journey we reached Ping-tichuan where our paths separated. Bartel took a train via Peking to his home in Shantung, and I, traveling in the opposite direction, returned to Chotzeshan. We could not know then that our next meeting would have to wait until we would meet in the Great Beyond.

Some time later, at a meeting in Taolin, Mrs. Wiens and I were invited to visit a young woman under the age of thirty. She had been ill for a long time, with seemingly no cure for the lingering disease. On the way we asked the Holy Spirit to give us words of comfort for these young believers. As we entered the patient's room she immediately began to praise God for his keeping power. Through her radiant testimony we were encouraged and deeply humbled before God as she quietly bore her suffering without murmuring.

On the return trip to Chotzeshan Mrs. Wiens rode on a cart drawn by a husky mule. The mountainous dirt road, winding through grain fields, was wet from the rain. Mrs. Wiens, well-protected with a tarp, bounced in rhythm with the cart. Suddenly, without warning, the mule bolted. Only the strength and courage of the cart driver prevented an accident. This was only one of many times we praised God for his watchful eye over us.

10

The Japanese Occupation of 1937

The Chotzeshan mission compound, many times in the pathway of warring armies, was plundered by the Mongolian troops during the Japanese occupation. All movable property was taken, and some of the buildings were damaged. After an incident at the Marco Polo bridge, July 7, 1937, the Ping Sui railroad was severed, with communications reinstated only months later. Because of this situation we were concerned about our son Victor's return to Pyengyang Foreign School in Pyengyang, Korea, for the fall opening. After seeking the Lord's guidance, we decided that my wife and Victor would cross the country and go either to Shanghai or to Tsingtao, where Victor could take a steamer to Korea. I would remain in Chotzeshan to supervise the repair of the buildings during the summer months. Even though good wages, palatable food, and their favorite tea helped cajole the men to do better work, some of the roofs still leaked during the heavy summer rains.

At this time Sara Heinrichs, Helen Willems (Duerksen) and Elizabeth Hofer left for the coast on business and a short vacation, and remained there until after the mission field was occupied by the invading troops.

A Bible conference, conducted at Chotzeshan shortly after Mrs. Wiens and Victor left for the coast, strengthened the Christians, who were aware that the enemy could occupy their homeland and thus threaten their religious, political, and social liberties. Perhaps a few were cognizant of the impact the Sino-Japanese struggle would have on the missionary work, while others misinterpreted the aims of the Japanese and were certain that the enemy would be driven out of China in a short time. Many peasants and businessmen fled in haste, taking

whatever mode of transportation was available. Trains coming from the war zone were packed with fleeing passengers, some finding seats on the roofs of the cars or locomotive, or even perching on the cow-catcher. Some villagers, yielding to the temptation to loot, found their way into the mission compound. The majority of the people, however, were honest and merely sought a safe retreat in the mission compound.

While waiting for events to unfold, I tried to dispose of some mission property. The Mongolian milk cows were sold far below market value. A Chinese army officer, after demanding my swift and well-groomed saddle horse, quickly rode away to escape the enemy forces: it was either accept his offer of a few dollars or let him take the horse by force. The mule which I planned to retain was taken by fleeing troops and an ox given in exchange. Later the ox proved very useful to the work. It was also much safer to travel in an oxcart because bandits, quite certain that only poor people traveled in such a vehicle, left us alone.

Chotzeshan soon became a ghost town with most of the business houses boarded up. The streets were deserted as people left in droves for safer areas in one of the western provinces. Government offices and schools closed and teachers



**Helen Willems Duerksen
(left) and Elizabeth Hofer.**

and pupils fled to the West. The fleeing masses, mainly women, old men, and children, carried as many personal belongings as possible. The younger men of draft age were inducted into the army and sent east to help stay the enemy. Trainloads of wounded soldiers passed through Chotzeshan to be treated in hospitals in Kueisui, the capital city of Suiyuan province. They were bedded on straw in railroad boxcars with no doctor or nurse to attend them.

One fall afternoon, after events had taken a turn for the worse, I asked an officer if it would be safe for me to remain at the mission station. The young, well-trained officer gave me an assuring positive answer. Early the next morning I went to inquire about the war reports, only to find that the local troops had all fled during the night. What now? There was no one left to consult. I became anxious about the safety and whereabouts of my wife and Victor. By this time we had been separated for more than three months without any communication. Moreover, Mrs. Wiens and Victor had our American passport with them, leaving me stranded in "no man's land" without documents. Further, my funds were very low and it was impossible to borrow money. In September of 1937, reluctantly leaving Chotzeshan, with my bedding roll, I traveled to the capital city of Kueisui where Mr. and Mrs. Hjalmar Eckblad, Swedish Alliance missionaries affiliated with the CIM (Overseas Missionary Fellowship), took me into their home for the duration of the war. When it became obvious the Japanese would capture Kueisui, Eckblad suggested we quickly ride our bicycles to their mission cemetery. At the cemetery, Eckblad pointed to five graves: two held his deceased wives and three his children. Standing at the head of the graves, Eckblad sang a song in Swedish and offered a prayer before we hastily returned to the mission compound.

Just before nightfall the national troops retreated to the West, and with them fled the city police force and the city government officials. All political prisoners and criminals were released from the prisons. By morning both city and countryside were occupied by the Japanese and Mongolian forces. A puppet government was formed. Emperor Teh Wang, a Mongolian, became the ruler of the newly formed state in Inner Mongolia, called Mongolian Federated Autonomous Government. The Japanese troops, never able to occupy all of Suiyuan Province, took possession of the main centers along the railroad

and county seats, collecting taxes and forcing young men to serve as guards.

After the Japanese occupation of most of the large centers of Suiyuan Province, the missionaries were able to return to their fields after acquiring travel visas from the Japanese army headquarters in Kueisui. These travel visas were reluctantly granted only after numerous requests and humble pleadings. On one occasion, while riding my bicycle to apply for a travel visa, I failed to stop and lead my bicycle through the headquarters gate, unaware of the ruling to dismount and walk. Immediately the guard struck me over the legs with his rod. Rules are learned quickly by this method. Eventually I received a military pass and hastened to prepare for the homeward journey to Chotzeshan.

At 4 a.m. I said good-bye to Eckblad and left by rickshaw for the railroad station. The passenger cars, packed with army personnel, had no room for foreigners. I climbed onto a flatcar and used my bundle of bedding as a cushion. Cold weather had already visited the Mongolian steppes with sub-zero weather quite common in that area. I turned my back toward the cold north wind; and though the only passenger in the flat car, I kept quite comfortable with my goatskin overcoat and fur cap.

When I arrived at Chotzeshan, the heavily guarded depot left no doubt in my mind that the Japanese military was in full command of the city. With some apprehension I approached the mission compound. The main entrance gate stood ajar revealing a deserted compound looking like a ghost town. A loud call brought our pet dog, Murray, out of hiding. Our two Mongolian watchdogs had been shot to death and the carcasses thrown into the drinking well. Another call brought the old gateman, Lao Yang, out of seclusion. He greeted me with "*Ping An Mu Shi*" (Peace be unto you, pastor) and beckoned me to follow him to the church. Once inside the door, I noticed the building had been converted into a bathhouse by the invading troops. Pews had been used as firewood to heat the bath water, windows and ceiling were badly damaged. While I was examining the damage, two Japanese officers walked into the church. I was apprehensive, suspecting they had come to arrest me. My fears subsided, however, as the officers voiced their disapproval of the damaged and looted church building and volunteered to go along to the inner court where the missionaries had lived before the evacuation.

The parsonage, the first dwelling we examined, had been emptied of most of its furniture. The kitchen floor was strewn with broken dishes. Overcome, I turned my face toward the wall and stood silently. Behind me the officer began to sing in Japanese, "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does its successive journeys run." Then he folded his hands and prayed earnestly in his native language. On our knees we shared a wonderful prayer meeting. The words of Christ, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20), came to mind. Although we did not understand each other, the Holy Spirit became our interpreter. After praying together, the officer beckoned me to follow him to the railroad station. Lack of full confidence, however, caused me to hesitate, and I stayed at the church. A few minutes later the officer's bodyguard returned with a Bible opened to Romans 8:33 and offered me 40 Japanese yen to help repair the damaged church building. The offer, however, was declined because the American Consul had advised us not to accept any damage settlement.

The Japanese officer and I did not meet again, but hope to meet in heaven. His bodyguard, however, was stationed at Chotzesan and attended prayer meetings at the mission. Placing his gun in the corner of the room, he would take his Japanese songbook and sing along with the rest of the worshipers. Only the love of Christ could unite the hearts of the Chinese, Japanese, and the American missionary.

News spread quickly that the "missionary" had returned. Some of the brethren came out of hiding and greeted me with: "*Ping An*" (Peace be unto you). Some, however, preferred to remain in exile. A few nationals became apologists for the Japanese, while by far the larger group remained loyal to the Chinese cause.

That first night alone on the compound was a woefully dark one; many questions loomed before me. How could the Christians be persuaded to return and resume their former responsibilities in the church and community? How could the populace be assured that the occupation forces would guarantee good and safe government? How could I discharge my God-given responsibilities while the province was occupied by enemy armed forces? These and other questions needed to be resolved by the grace and help of God. At this time, still not knowing where Mrs. Wiens might be, I reasoned that if she



Wiens and two Japanese officers in front of mission.

were on the mainland we would soon be reunited. With this hope before me, I approached the task of rebuilding the mission compound with enthusiasm.

Soon many of the Christians and townspeople began returning to their homes and businesses with undaunted optimism, exceptional courage, and fortitude. Although it was quiet during the day, sporadic fighting continued through the nights; and in time the populace became accustomed to the nightly warfare. A greater dependence on the Lord was evidenced among the brethren as the result of their suffering. The Word became more meaningful in the well-attended worship services and prayer meetings. Although still under the yoke of the occupation forces, the Chinese were free in spirit.

I met the train each day, anxiously waiting for word of my wife's whereabouts and return. Repair of the mission buildings

occupied my time during this waiting period. Since lumber and bricks were unavailable in Chotzeshan, repair and/or replacement of ruined properties was difficult. Before floors could be laid, doors and windows replaced, and cabinets restored, a huge log or tree trunk had to be purchased. This tree trunk, green because of its recent cutting, did not make good building material, but was used because of the scarcity of lumber. Cut at the building site with a bucksaw into various lengths and widths, no two boards were the same size or shape; even the thickness varied. However, lumber hewn out of these rough boards was used to lay floors and build doors and window frames; and the finished product was quite acceptable.

Movable property missing from the buildings needed to be replaced. School desks, together with the church furniture, had disappeared. The church organ, spotted about one hundred miles west of Chotzeshan, was never returned. The mattresses, destroyed during the occupation, could not be bought in the interior, so I engaged some Christian women to make thin mattresses, which turned out to be quite comfortable. At least they were softer than boards.

Thanksgiving Day was especially lonely for me, with hope for my wife's return beginning to wane. In the evening, as usual, I went to the depot hoping she might arrive. This time I was not disappointed. Anna Klassen, Sara Heinrichs and my wife stepped from the train. We had been separated for five months. The story of her experiences during this time follows in the next chapter.

11

Cross-country to Tsingtao

Murmurings of political unrest around Peking had reached us late in June 1937. We soon learned that these rumors were authentic. Fighting had begun between the Chinese and Japanese at the Marco Polo bridge, near Peking, on July 7. By the end of July the Peking-Tientsin areas were in the Japanese hands.

Victor, hoping to continue his high school studies in September, became concerned about his return to Pyeng Yang, Korea. Unable to get through to our bank in Peking, we began to have financial trouble. An alternative plan to go to the Shanghai Overseas Missionary Fellowship headquarters for help developed through their associate missionaries in Kueisui. Trusting the Lord to lead, my wife and Victor began their journey south by train to Tatung. A missionary friend obtained passage for them on a bus which would take them to Taiyuan, Shansi.

The missionary's coolies were sent ahead to save seats for the two foreigners. The fenced area, presumably to keep out the general public, did not fulfill its purpose. At one time the crowd became so dense that Mrs. Wiens was lifted up by the pressure. One good push with both elbows by her strong teenage son dispersed the crowd enough so that she was back on the ground again. After considerable jostling they boarded the bus.

Much rain had fallen and muddy and hazardous roads in some areas slowed their progress. After traveling for several hours under these conditions, they met an army truck bogged down in the mud. The soldier demanded that he be pushed out, but the bus driver refused, whereupon the soldier drew his gun. A quick positive response to the soldier's command put the

truck on solid ground and the bus continued on its way.

At noon the bus driver, deciding not to continue the trip, stopped at a village, which was no more than an inn, and settled down to enjoy his opium pipe. The Chinese passengers bought their lunch at the inn, but the two foreigners were refused service, the excuse being that it was not good enough for them. After some cajoling they finally were able to obtain a bowl of noodles apiece. Night lodging in the inn, however, was altogether out of the question for the foreigners. They were referred to an abandoned house a few rods up the road from the inn. It was quite evident that this house, without windows and doors, would be unsafe to stay in overnight. Some passengers, anxious to continue the journey, solicited bribes from the passengers hoping the bus driver would change his mind and continue the journey. The scheme worked and before dusk they were back in the bus and on their way.

Realizing that much time had been lost, the driver decided to make up at least some of it. The high cliffs on one side and deep gullies on the other, combined with excess speed, were enough to frighten the travelers. Windows broke and the glass scattered among the passengers as the bus sped over rocks and through dips in the road. Small children screamed and cried. At a fairly good-sized village the driver stopped, and the two foreigners were able to rent a room and be alone — or were they alone? As soon as the lights were turned off, they felt something crawling all over their bodies. When the lights were turned on, the insects disappeared under the mat.

By noon the next day the travelers reached Taiyuan, where they went to the British Missionary hospital; and from there they were taken to the doctor's home for the night. Early the next morning my wife and son boarded a narrow-gauge train for Shih Chia Chuang. After spending the night in a Chinese inn, they took a train to Cheng Chou. Much rain had fallen since their journey had begun. However, as long as the train followed the mountain terrain, the volume of rain was not a concern; in sea-level country, however, floods threatened their progress. As they crossed the Yellow River, the train slowed to a snail's pace, and all the blinds in the coach were quickly drawn. The temptation to peek was cut short when one of the train's police pointed his gun and demanded that the blinds remain drawn. That little peek, however, was enough to reveal that the muddy waters reached the floor of the bridge.

In Cheng Chou, due to the flood damage, Mrs. Wiens and Victor waited several hours for a train to Hsue Chou Fu, just east of the Grand Canal. Later, while eating their evening meal in an inn at Hsue Chou Fu, a young missionary who had come from Shanghai and knew about the political conditions there advised them strongly against proceeding to Shanghai. After enjoying a peaceful night under mosquito nets, my wife and Victor heeded the words of the young missionary and turned northward instead of south, reaching Tsinan at midnight.

On Saturday morning, just a week after leaving their home in Chotzeshan, they left Tsinan by train for the beautiful coast city of Tsingtao, arriving there in the late afternoon. After a time of relaxation Victor called his classmate, Parker Anspach, making arrangements to attend church services on Sunday morning together with the Anspach family and have dinner with them. The Anspachs also helped the newcomers find a place to stay until the Pyeng Yang students would leave for school in Korea. Comfortable lodging, provided for them in the Surtees' home, was shared with other missionaries from Shanghai and surrounding areas, who were stranded because of the unrest farther south.

Because both Mrs. Wiens and Victor were traveling on one passport, they either had to continue to travel together or wait for the other to return the passport. For this reason my wife waited patiently until the Pyeng Yang students had arrived safely by boat and train at their beloved school. However, by the time Victor returned the passport from Korea, the war with the Japanese had advanced and spread so far that it was unthinkable for my wife to return home via the same route she had come. To compound her apprehension, communication with the mission station in Chotzeshan was nil; consequently, no word could be sent to me. Only dependence on God, comfort through his Word, and fellowship with other missionaries kept her heart and mind collected and peaceful.

In mid-September a voyage could be made to Tientsin. It was a lovely trip by boat and all went well. The China Inland Mission hostel, where the missionaries had stayed on previous occasions, was filled to capacity with their own stranded missionaries. The Church of Canada Mission, however, was able to accommodate Mrs. Wiens and gave her a room in the attic with Anna Klassen, Elizabeth Hofer, and a Miss Hutchison. They enjoyed each other's company and called their attic "The

Upper Room." While in Tientsin Mrs. Wiens found opportunity for service and sewed quite a number of surgical articles for the Church of England Mission hospital.

By November, news from the interior began to trickle through. With travel communication restored to the East Coast, Mr. Eckblad of the Swedish Alliance Mission in Kueisui, made a trip to Tientsin. In the meantime as already related, I had returned to Chotzeshan. I sent warm clothing with him, hoping that he would be able to contact Mrs. Wiens somewhere and bring her back home. On his arrival in Tientsin Eckblad learned the whereabouts of Mrs. Wiens through the China Inland Mission Home. In a few days Sara Heinrichs, who had been stranded in Peking, Anna Klassen, Mrs. Wiens, and Eckblad boarded the train to return to Chotzeshan. After nearly five months without any communication, we celebrated our reunion on Thanksgiving Day. Reflecting upon those days of God's wonderful guidance and protecting care, one must say with Paul, "How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out."

Our celebration, however, was cut short. That evening the first incident with a Japanese soldier took place. The gateman reported that a Japanese soldier, threatening to kill everyone in the compound, insisted that the gates in the front court be opened. Reluctantly, responding to the urgent call, I prayerfully and quietly walked to the gate. The intruder forced his army rifle through an opening between the large heavy doors. Deliberately and firmly, I placed my hand on the weapon and slowly pushed it back so the doors could be closed tightly and secured. After this incident the women in the front court yard felt they would be safer in our house; consequently, the parsonage was full of guests that night. The Lord, gracious and caring, protected us from harm.

12

The Work during the Japanese Occupation

In 1936 the Tu Mu Erh Tai congregation invited Evangelist Chang and me to serve with meetings and baptism. Because of the severe winter weather, traveling on mountainous terrain and poor roads in the Inner Mongolian territory was difficult. Two vehicles, rented from the Japanese military to make the two-day trip, carried a metal baptistry, literature, and baggage. The trucks, first loaded with freight and baggage, were then loaded with as many passengers as could possibly crowd on top of the baggage. With no shelter against the cold blast, fur coats, caps, and warm footwear were necessary; and the trucks, though already overloaded, added more passengers along the way.

The first afternoon while we were traveling through dense sage brush and blowing sand, the engine on the lead truck ceased to function properly. Immediately, the driver stopped the truck and began demonstrating his mechanical skills. First an American army blanket was spread out on the frozen ground. Then the carburetor was taken apart and all the parts and screws carefully placed on the blanket. The driver was advised that because of the poor quality of gasoline the water in the gas might be frozen and all he needed to do was to thaw out the ice, dry the parts, and put it together. The advice, however, was not heeded. Instead every part was carefully examined, exhibited, and then replaced in proper position. The driver, after reassembling most of the parts, did, however, have a few left over. Finally he announced that the extra parts were superfluous and nonessential to the smooth operation of the engine. Needless to say, the engine would not start.

While waiting for the second truck to arrive, many passengers took short walks to keep warm. We could see no village or living being anywhere. The setting sun reminded us



Wiens baptizing

that one could easily freeze to death in 30 to 40 degree weather, or be attacked by a pack of Mongolian wolves. Fears dissipated when the second truck arrived and towed the disabled vehicle to the nearest village. Deep snow covered the area and our first concern again was to find night lodging. It was dark and most of the establishments had already boarded their windows and doors for the night. We experienced the Lord's care when a nearby inn accepted evangelist Chang and me, served us a good meal, and gave us night's lodging. The next day we arrived safely in Tu Mu Erh Tai, for guards rode along to protect passengers and freight against bandits. The well-attended meeting lasted three hours. When we wanted to dismiss the audience, evangelist Tang informed us that the people desired to hear more of the gospel. So we began to preach again and no one left the church until sundown. Some accepted the Lord as Savior and a number were baptized.

On our return trip I was asked to sit in the cab with the driver, who charged an additional dollar this time. Passengers who boarded the truck along the way paid their fare but did not receive tickets. As the truck neared Pingtichuan, the driver stopped to unload these passengers. Curious, I asked about this procedure. He explained, "These people have no tickets; we can't transport them free of charge." The extra money lined his pockets.

During the Japanese occupation of Suiyuan Province travel was troublesome. Visas were required to travel by train and verbal permission was needed to visit the surrounding villages. The Japanese used the alibi that they were responsible for the missionaries and thus must be informed about the movements of the foreign staff. The truth was that the Japanese officials suspected the American missionaries of subversive activities. At one time I was interrogated for three hours by two Japanese officials wanting to know why American missionaries would live in Inner Mongolia just to preach the gospel. They obviously believed there was an ulterior motive behind the missionary's activities. Certain that the missionary was paid a good sum of money by the U.S. government to engage in the work, they would not believe that each worker received only housing and \$25 per month from their own foreign mission board.

When it became necessary to make an urgent business trip to Peking I acquired the necessary travel visas and tickets. When I reached Pingtichuan, the first larger city toward the east, two Japanese officials boarded the train to investigate the visa issued in Chotzeshan. Although they were not satisfied, I was allowed to continue the trip. About ten o'clock the same evening a White Russian, in the service of the police, warned me to be ready at 2 a.m. for visa and baggage inspection. For some unknown reason the inspector did not appear. In Peking, I was under the care of the American Consul General and consequently not watched by the Japanese.

On my return trip, however, I became aware that the Japanese had made Kalgan a terminal point for passengers going west to Pao Tou. Before the train arrived at Kalgan, I quickly slipped into pajamas and climbed into the upper berth, feeling quite secure tucked away under the warm blankets. Just minutes before the train was to leave the Kalgan station, the passport official demanded to see my American passport. As

often was the case, he was unable to read English well, and thus created unnecessary misunderstanding. Rejecting all reasonable explanations, he demanded that I leave the train in the middle of the night, and threw my passport to the floor. The engineer blew the whistle, signaling the train's departure, and the official quickly had to find his way off the train. Procrastination spared me a night in the bitter cold weather.

Victor enjoyed his last Christmas in the Orient before graduation from the Pyeng Yang Foreign School in Pyeng Yang, Korea, in Chotzeshan with us and the rest of the missionary staff. The time for his return to Pyeng Yang came only too soon. Boarding the train at Chotzeshan, Victor looked for a place in one of the crowded cars behind the engine. Approximately two hours later, far from an urban center, the last three cars of the train derailed. As the car behind the one Victor was occupying tore loose, the escaping steam obscured the wreckage falling down a 25-foot embankment. We heard about the accident in Chotzeshan but were not certain it was the same train Victor had boarded. Only the next day when a Chinese official from the railroad depot informed us that Victor had been on the wrecked train but was safe, did we understand God's protecting care.

One evening after we had retired for the night, we heard a knock at the door. Since the Chinese usually hum or cough to make their approach known, Mrs. Wiens feared the knock might mean my abduction and suggested I dress warmly before opening the door. The intruder, impatient with waiting, knocked on the window pane, and in so doing broke the glass and cut his hand. When we opened the door, a Japanese general and his bodyguard burst in, both under the influence of liquor. Immediately threatening to kill us, the general demanded wine and cigarettes. Informed that neither were available, the general went to the front court and forced one of the Chinese workers to purchase cigarettes for him. Since martial law was in effect on the streets, the native returned without having been able to make the purchase. At once the officer threatened him with his sword. I attempted to mediate. With sword drawn, the officer then challenged me. Mrs. Wiens and the Chinese slipped into the dark bedroom and through a hall which led to a door into the outer court, where they found refuge in the sheep barn. The two officers shoved me into a corner in the living room where they threatened me for the next two hours. A sword in

the hands of a vicious, drunken person is a lethal weapon. While still in the homeland I had stated on various occasions that, if necessary, I would be willing to suffer martyrdom for the cause of Christ. Now, when the test came, I was not so sure. Only the pleading of the bodyguard with his superior not to harm the missionary saved my life. At two o'clock in the morning the intruders left, threatening, however, to return and destroy the mission compound.

Japanese occupation officials now demanded that all Protestant missions and churches unite in one body. That which the Protestants were unable to accomplish in more than a century, the Japanese officials were able to do by force in a short time. Delegates representing Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Mennonites and independents, met in Kalgan, Chahar Province, on the Methodist mission compound for the merger conference. The object of the merger was to give the Japanese a central body of churchmen with which to work. The Meng Chiang Christian Council was organized and a constitution framed with which all missions could agree under the circumstances. At the close of the business session, Horace Williams, representing the Methodist Mission in Kalgan, was elected chairman, and I, representing the Inner Mongolian Mission, became the secretary. This executive committee met only once before the war between the United States and Japan started. That war ended the experiment.

The prayers and work of the brethren of the Inner Mongolian Mission during the Japanese occupation resulted in a revival under the ministry of Wang Ming Tao, an outstanding evangelist, pastor, and writer in North China, who faithfully proclaimed the Word of God, rebuking the sins and evils committed by the liberal churches and preaching that Christians must be separated from the world.

One Sunday afternoon in Chotzesan, Wang Ming Tao preached three hours on the new birth, proving unmistakably to the worshipers that the new birth was essential to enter the Kingdom of God. Although the national armies were badly defeated after a long, fiercely waged struggle, new victories were won by the local Chinese in their spiritual battles as souls were saved and God's people were revived.

Wang Ming Tao also published a magazine, *The Spiritual Quarterly*. In the November 1951 issue he reprinted a prayer which was first published in 1927. The contents of this prayer

reveal his awareness of the persecutions that would come upon him and the church if they remained true to the Word of God.

Almighty and Eternal God! How fearful is this world as it bares its great teeth to eat one up! How weak is my heart as it rests in Thee! My God, help me that I may thwart all the wisdom of this world. . . . I have no quarrel with the rulers of this world. I, myself would wish to spend my days in happiness and peace. . . . But the affairs of this day are for Thy cause! Thy cause is just and righteous and everlasting. . . . I pray Thee for the sake of Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, be at my side! He is my fortress; He is my shield; He also is my defence. Now I am prepared and ready. Ready to give my life for Thy truth — weak and helpless as a lamb. Though the world be filled with devils; though for punishment they put me in the stocks and tear me to pieces or cut me up; yes, though they burn me to ashes, yet is my life with Thee. . . . Amen, I pray Thee, help me Amen!

During this time Anna Klassen and Elizabeth Hofer continued to serve the Chi Hsia Ying outstation west of Chotzeshan. The work, opened during the time John S. Dick served as interim superintendent of the Inner Mongolian field, had survived Japanese occupation. The two ladies, usually traveling by train to Chi Hsia Ying, visited the outlying villages either on foot or by horsecart. Always happy to see and listen to the women, the Chinese would have tea ready when they arrived.

In the early fall of 1938 these two women, with the assistance of the school principal Chang and his wife, who was a Bible woman, conducted meetings in Chi Hsia Ying and in Pa Tsa Ku, a village about two miles from the railroad. Satan, alert and busy while the gospel was being preached, used one man to disturb the meeting. Just at the time the meeting began he had seizures caused by terrific stomach pain, but as soon as the meeting concluded his pain was gone. Admitting that God had spoken to him, this man said, "I permitted Satan to overcome me."

At the conclusion of the meetings six precious souls were baptized and received into the church. The streambed, too shallow for immersion, had to be excavated. With many willing helpers the task was quickly accomplished so that the baptism could take place.

13

Treatment of the Sick

Although there was no trained doctor on the field in Inner Mongolia, the mission maintained a medical dispensary to care for the sick. The two registered nurses, Anna Klassen and Sara Heinrichs, kept busy seeking ways to relieve the suffering. Two hospitals, one east of Chotzeshan at Tatung and the other in Kueisui, west of Chotzeshan, could be reached by train. The critically ill were taken to one of these locations for treatment. The purpose of maintaining the medical dispensary was to relieve suffering humanity, to promote sanitation, and to create interest in Christianity.

The Chinese, reluctant to accept modern medicines, suffered from widespread diseases. Later, however, no other venture met as little opposition from the Chinese as did the healing arts. With limited resources at their disposal, the medical staff performed a distinct service for the spiritual and physical need of many individuals. The record of Christ's healing the sick became the scriptural basis for medical missions in Inner Mongolia.

In a report of May 18, 1949, Rev. F. V. Wiebe wrote as follows:

We started to treat sick and wounded immediately upon arrival at Chotzeshan. We did it on the streets so the people could watch. That was in 1923. Later at the mission we arranged a room especially for that purpose. . . . I have extracted teeth to the extent that I still have marks in my right hand where the forceps dug into the flesh. . . . The biggest operation I have been able to perform was sewing on a nose which had been shot off by a bandit. . . . I adjusted it, sewed it on and prayed God to bless it. . . . The

nose was completely healed and only the marks of the stitches were still visible.¹

Because of the other work on the mission field, the treating of the sick was limited to only two afternoons a week. Many of the patients came early and brought a mat on which to rest while waiting for treatment. In one case an elderly lady with a very sore foot had wrapped it in old rags and green leaves. The missionary, seeing that the sore was festering, broke the rule of only afternoon treatments, and cleansed the wound. Missionaries also cared for accident cases, such as a 12-year-old girl with a slashed cheek, a six-year-old boy whose legs were splintered by gun shots, and a small child scalded by falling into the family kettle of boiling water. Such cases were deplorable sights and it took much grace to treat them.

In a report written perhaps in 1926, Wiebe mentions: "The care of the sick has increased considerably during the past year. Nearly 1,500 sick and wounded have been treated and the Gospel of Christ as Savior and Great Physician was preached to them."

One day Mr. Yang, who had been baptized in summer, came to the mission and said that his older brother was very ill. Although there was much work at the mission Wiebe went along with Yang. Upon their arrival, Yang crawled to his brother in the far corner of the *kang* where he lay and told him that the *Mu Shi* (pastor) had come. The patient, wanting to rise, was too weak to do so. Seeing that the man had suffered much, Wiebe crawled to him, disregarding the dirt, and asked if he could pray for him. The man nodded his head, and both visitors prayed for healing. After inquiring about the symptoms of his illness, Wiebe left a little medication and gave orders how to care for him. At the mission, the group prayed for the sick man and the Lord honored by restoring his health.

After the evacuation of 1927-28 Anna Klassen assumed responsibility of caring for the sick and courageously pursued that work. Rachel (Wiebe) Hiebert was of notable assistance in the clinic since she spoke Chinese fluently and enjoyed aiding the sick. The clinic was a room divided in two by a curtain drawn in the middle; the first part served as a waiting room for the patients where they heard the gospel from one of the evangelists. The back portion was the treatment room.

A villager whose injured leg had been bothering him for months came to the clinic. His wounds were carefully cleansed,

ointment was applied, and he was sent on his way rejoicing and thankful. Another man whose fingers were decomposing because they had been frozen also came for help. Many such cases stumped the intellect of the missionaries, but often simple remedies were effectively blessed by the Lord. Some patients, too ill to come to the clinic, needed to be visited in their homes. Three times a day Miss Klassen visited a man with pneumonia in his poverty-stricken home to bring him food and medicine. The salvation story, presented to him during his illness, caused him to pray, "Jesus, have pity on me" and "Jesus forgive." The missionary trusted he accepted the Lord before he died. The family's poverty was so great they asked Miss Klassen for a used straw mat in which to wrap the corpse for burial. Miss Klassen arranged for the missionary staff to buy an inexpensive coffin and conduct a Christian funeral for the man. This action made a profound impression upon the family as well as the community. As a result the widow attended the meetings regularly after her husband's death and demonstrated a deep desire to follow Jesus.

Within a period of nine months, Anna Klassen wrote in a letter that she had treated 1,126 patients in the mission clinic.



Anna Klassen



Adelgunda Priebe

She also expressed her appreciation for "the used sheets and other white materials we received from churches in the United States that could be used for bandages."

In 1931 Anna Klassen took over the supervision of the mission school, and Adelgunda Priebe, from the Mennonite Brethren South China field, took over the responsibility of the clinical work. These sisters in Christ had been classmates and had graduated from the Newton, Kansas, Bethel Deaconess Hospital nurses training course. Their medical cases came from various economic classes. The left ear of one poor woman was filled with maggots. In winter a 17-year-old girl requested treatment for frozen hands and feet. Even after much attention the toes on both feet dropped off as well as some fingers on her right hand. One man's legs had been deeply burned because he refused to disclose the hiding place of his money to robbers.

In 1933, after completing six months of study at the Peking Union Language School, Sara Heinrichs returned to Chotzeshan to assume the responsibility of the medical work. One soldier she examined had been seriously wounded in the chest during an encounter with bandits. The soldier, brought to the clinic in sub-zero weather astride a donkey from a village about 15 miles away was too ill for a long train ride to the nearest hospital. Deacon Chen was called to tell the dying man how he could be saved and be ready to meet his Maker. Before falling into a coma he assured Sara Heinrichs that Christ had come into his heart. Another man, mercilessly tortured by bandits and seared with a hot ladle, was brought to the mission. A simple ointment made of potato starch, limewater, oil, and a teaspoon of boric acid applied to the burns, healed the man completely. Thus another miracle happened.

Chinese custom did not permit a woman to disrobe sufficiently for a doctor or nurse to examine her. Often the Chinese doctor felt her pulse and on that basis made a diagnosis. Bicarbonate of soda, divided into ten packets of a half teaspoonful each, was left with the patient with instructions to take one morning and evening. Sara Heinrichs reported, "In these cases the healing is done by the Lord."

Mrs. Chia, a recent convert, came to Sara Heinrichs pleading for physical help for her daughter-in-law, who, crippled with an ailing back, crawled from place to place. The daughter-in-law lived with Mr. Yue, a retired railroad worker, and his two daughters in the mission compound. Mr. Yue, a man of God,



Sarah Heinrichs



Mrs. Helen (Willems) Duerksen

assured the crippled woman that the God of the Bible would heal her back by means of medical aid which Sara Heinrichs could give. As was customary, her pulse was taken, but failed to provide a clue to the cause of the crippled condition. To soothe the pain and to satisfy the patient and the people gathered in the room, medication was given. When Miss Heinrichs returned to reexamine the patient, the patient requested an injection, which Miss Heinrichs conceded might be helpful. Since the clinic was not equipped with a medical laboratory where tests could be made, Miss Heinrichs was thrilled when the patient reacted favorably to the injection. The following day the patient asserted that her condition was greatly improved; consequently, the injections were continued. Following the second injection a rash appeared over most of her body. At the time Miss Heinrichs wondered if she had made a mistake, but in a few days the patient claimed she was much better, began to stand upright, and soon returned to her home completely healed.

Some time later Mrs. Chia came with another request. "Since you have helped my daughter-in-law, I want you to free my married daughter from her opium habit." The well-groomed young woman came from a wealthy home, and supposedly had everything money could offer. Therefore, as long as her husband was willing to provide her with ample funds, she kept

using opium. During the withdrawal period the daughter was in severe pain and unable to sleep. Day and night, pacing back and forth in the compound, she prayed that the Lord might relieve her from the bitter curse which had come upon her life. She, too, was saved and the Lord released her from the curse of opium.

In 1800 the Chinese government had made renewed efforts to suppress the use of opium. But the demand for opium brought the drug into China by bribery and smuggling. Much of the opium, carried in British and other foreign crafts, was sold to pirates and opium smugglers along the Canton river.¹

The Opium War (1840-42) between England and China ended with the Treaty of Nanking, August 29, 1842, which formed the basis governing China's international trade until 1943 when this unequal system ended. Even though China regarded the opium traffic as the primary cause of the war, the treaty did not mention the drug traffic. However, it stipulated the payment of \$6 million for the opium seized. Since the Chinese would not agree to the legalization of opium, the treaty remained silent on the crucial question.³ During the opium crisis at Canton, the Americans turned over their opium to the British for surrender to the Chinese. While the British withdrew to Macao, and later to Hongkong, the Americans remained in Canton. There they engaged in lucrative trade carrying cargoes of British goods. British ships were not allowed to enter the Canton river.⁴

In the Chotzesan area an average of nine people out of ten were addicted to opium. The poppy fields of pink, white, and yellow flowers grew next to the mission compound. People, well aware of the ill effects opium had on society, continued using opium as a pain-killer for the young children as well as for the older people. Most of the local doctors, not qualified to give patients relief, often treated them with a dose of opium, with the result that many children became addicted.

During the latter years an opium clinic was opened on the mission compound. The clinic, surrounded by a high wall which secured the patients, made it more difficult for dope peddlers to gain access to their victims. The patients, who were searched before admittance and relieved of all opium, were usually locked up for the duration of the cure. All patients were urged to accept Christ's forgiveness of sin and to lean upon him for release from the bondage of sin. Of the 55 patients who were

accepted for opium cure and dismissed as probably cured, only about 15 were healed. These were the ones who had accepted the Lord as Savior.

One young man, a drug addict, came to the clinic for a cure. After three weeks of prayer and withdrawal medication, he seemed free of the curse of opium and became a new creature in Christ. However, when he returned to his home about 18 miles away, he also returned to his former sinful habit. The believers prayed much for him, and he came back to Chotzesan, but stayed away from the clinic out of embarrassment. Only after the urgent invitation of Sara Heinrichs did he come back to the mission and to the Lord. However, this time he would not take any withdrawal medication; he wanted to trust God alone.

After he had completely withdrawn from opium, Sara Heinrichs and Helen Willems Duerksen were invited to start an outstation at Ho Chien, where he lived. A rent-free house was made available to them, which served as a chapel and a place for the two women and a Bible woman to stay while in the village. An evangelist was transferred here from a nearby village at the request of the villagers, and so the gospel was given to those who had never had this privilege. Sara Heinrichs and Helen Willems served this area with the gospel and medical aid until Miss Heinrichs left for the homeland in 1940.

Another need for Christian service was in the area of obstetrics. To enter the home of a person in need was always an opportunity to witness for Christ. The average missionary nurse, however, was not adequately trained in the field of obstetrics. Whenever the midwife was unable to deliver the child, the missionary nurse was called by the anguished husband to save the wife. By this time the home was usually in a state of disarray. Often the women of the neighborhood stood by to offer advice and counsel that had been helpful in comparable cases. Their advice, however, usually had little merit. The woman to be delivered was usually placed on a sandpile in a semi-dark room. The average home had few conveniences, such as white sheets or even a wash basin, to create an antiseptic environment. Yet in all the obstetric cases during Miss Heinrichs' practice, no umbilical cord hemorrhaged and no mother contracted puerperal fever. Without the grace of God, many of the children would not have survived. When a Chinese midwife delivered the baby, the cord was measured from the base of the abdomen to the top of the baby's head,

Below, a photo of the missionary personnel in 1938. At right, Sara Heinrichs with the first baby she delivered. Bottom photo, villagers bring patient to clinic.



where it was severed. The midwife did not tie the cord, but massaged it to cause the blood to flow in the opposite direction, and then laid the cord on the infant's abdomen.

Miss Heinrichs had discussed her future work with two American doctors while all three were studying in the Peking Union Language School. The doctors were not in the least sympathetic with the crude clinic where she would be working. They warned her not to practice medicine under those conditions, for she might make serious mistakes forcing her to leave the country, never to return. All Miss Heinrichs could do was to trust in the Lord. Four years later she met one of the doctors in Peking. Naturally she told him about her practice at the Chotzeshan medical clinic. She informed him she had delivered many babies without one case of puerperal infection and without losing a baby because of navel infection. The astonished doctor replied, "Well, then we have had them all."

In Miss Heinrichs' seven years of medical practice, she had 73 obstetric cases. Babies could not always be saved; some died before birth. But very few mothers were lost. In cases where help came too late and it was impossible to deliver the child, the patient was committed into the hands of the Lord. According to Chinese tradition, if the attending physician was unable to deliver the child, the doctor was liable for the death of the patient.

Once Miss Heinrichs was called by a couple living in a mountainside cave: "I was called to deliver a woman who had been in labor for three days. After examining the patient I was convinced that delivery could be made only with forceps. This I did, with the result that the mother's life was saved." A few years later Miss Heinrichs was again called to the same cave for another delivery. After a careful examination, she reluctantly realized she could not help the woman. The husband was instructed to hurry to Kueisui, the capital city, to secure help. A Swedish missionary nurse had promised to be available in difficult cases. The husband, feeling it his duty to stay with his wife, refused to go. However, the wife's brother carried the request to Miss Svenson. It took three days and three nights for the party to return with the much-needed help. During that time Miss Heinrichs remained with the woman on the hard brick bed, sharing with her patient Christ's death and willingness to be her Savior. The patient understood the message sufficiently to accept Christ as her personal Savior. Miss

Svenson and Miss Heinrichs did all they could under the abnormal circumstances, but the woman slowly died.

The last three years of Miss Heinrichs' services on the field were under the Japanese occupation forces. Sometimes Miss Heinrichs was called to the barracks to treat soldiers. In the beginning the Japanese officers and soldiers frequently visited with the mission personnel and were friendly and helpful. Then came the test. As mission director, I was instructed that doctors, nurses, and medical aides had to be certified. No one, including Chinese, Japanese, and Americans, would be allowed to practice medicine without proper credentials. The warning message was received with some misgiving. If the Japanese closed the clinic and prohibited all medical work, an important aspect of mission work would be terminated.

For some days and weeks nothing further was said by the Japanese authorities and Miss Heinrichs continued to serve. Then one day three Japanese officers demanded to see Miss Heinrichs and her credentials. She dug to the bottom of her trunk and came up with a roll of documents from every school she had attended, including her nursing certificate. She handed the documents to the officers with no explanation. After looking them over, the men threw the roll on the floor and left. After weeks without any official response to the visit, Miss Heinrichs finally received permission to continue her medical practice. She wrote: "I went on helping the poor, sick, and needy folk with the official blessing of the Japanese officials and the work continued with the help of the Lord." ⁵

14

First Furlough

In 1940 the KMB mission board looked for new recruits to replace us when we returned to the United States on furlough. Isaiah 65:24, "Before they call I will answer," became a reality when the Sam Goossens responded to that call and came to China in the fall of 1940. Since the Japanese, already in power, did not allow foreigners to travel freely, the Goossens were not permitted to enter China farther than Peking. Here they stayed with German missionaries, the H. Rucks, for some time and later rented a house where they were able to study Chinese with a private teacher. They put heart and soul into language study, for they fully expected to use that knowledge to bring the good news of God's grace and salvation to those still in darkness and sin. There were testings of faith, as well as joys, during their stay in Peking. They soon discovered that the testings were for their good. Joy came when in February 1941 a daughter was born.

We, as missionaries, had the sincere desire to work uninterrupted on the field to which God had called us. Sometimes, however, sickness, death, unrest in the land, and wars have a tendency to interfere with the smooth operation of the work. Fear that one might become a casualty became very real. Often those of us with a western cultural background found the mores and customs of the country quite objectionable. Learning a foreign language is a lifetime task, and at best the foreigner's speech will betray him. Our spiritual foundation was attacked from all angles by idol worship and demon possession. Moreover, bandits quite commonly hid in villages and threatened the lives of nationals and missionaries alike. In 1936 Madame Chiang said of the missionaries:

Missionaries have succored the wounded and helped our



Mr. and Mrs. Sam Goossen

refugees, have faced bayonets, cannons, and bombs . . . and have stood their ground. The Generalissimo and I feel that no words we could speak could sufficiently express our depth of gratitude to the missionary bodies all over China, who have been a help to the distressed and the best of friends to the millions of refugees.¹

Slowly the Japanese leaders had been pushing from Manchuria into North China and Inner Mongolia. There were rumors that Japanese had been seen northwest of Taolin. They were gradually gaining control of the business interests of the Chinese and Mongolians. If Japan wanted to consolidate her territorial gains before the Chinese became too strong, she would have to act swiftly.²

On July 7, 1937, six months after the Sian Incident, China's life and death struggle began at the Marco Polo Bridge. Japanese troops entered Wang Ping with the Chinese soldiers resisting the rifle fire. However, Japanese troops managed to overrun much of North China, the principal cities and Inner Mongolia in a short time.³

Traveling in the interior and to the coastal cities became more and more troublesome and perplexing. Freedom of speech and expression was restricted considerably. The occupation troops had little sympathy with the work of missions *per se*.

The missionary was suspected of indirectly engaging in espionage and was not permitted to leave the city limits without a military pass.

When the political conditions became acute, the American Consul and also the KMB Foreign Mission Board in the homeland urged all the missionaries to return to the United States. In 1941 the Goossens, Anna Klassen, Elizabeth Hofer, Helen Willems and our family returned to America. Our finite minds were unable to grasp the significance of God's dealings with his children; he says in Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

Return to China

After an absence of six years from the Inner Mongolian field during the Second World War, four of the former missionaries, Mrs. Wiens and I, Anna Klassen and Elizabeth Hofer, returned to the land to which God had called us. Unaware that the Communists occupied North China and were beginning to enter Mongolia, we were ignorant of the imminent danger that threatened much of China.

When we left San Francisco May 20, 1947, on the S.S. *General W. H. Gordon*, we were not sure of a place to stay in either Shanghai or Tientsin. However, the Lord again provided. Mr. Scratch, of the Assemblies of God Mission, met us at the pier and then graciously took us to their mission home. Mrs. Wiens recalled that she had met the wife of Mr. Scratch in Pyeng Yang, Korea, at Victor's high school graduation in 1939.

With faith and confidence in the future of Christian missions in China, missionaries from many lands gladly returned to the work which they had reluctantly left several years before. In the home churches interest toward foreign missions increased considerably after the war. In 1951 over fifty million dollars was raised for foreign missions in the United States. This was almost twice the amount raised during a quarter of a century before. The number of Protestant missionaries from the United States and Canada increased considerably during the same period.¹

While going through customs in Shanghai we met Loyal Bartel, who had accompanied his family to the coast. Mrs. Bartel, together with their children, planned to return to the United States. Loyal, expecting to stay a short time longer with the work in Tsao Hsien, informed me that he planned to follow his family in the near future. For some unknown reason he did

not have the privilege and as a good soldier of the cross, remained with the work until the Lord took him to his reward.

While in the United States, Anna Klassen had been unable to buy the so-called wonder drugs. In Shanghai however, they were sold freely on the streets by vendors with large supplies. We also had our first experience with the runaway inflation when I wrote my first check of three million Chinese *Yuan*.

At Tientsin, Mr. Kieble, housefather of the CIM Home (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) assured us of sufficient lodging at their home. Going through customs in Tientsin was unpleasant as we waited for the Chevrolet pickup truck which the Bethel Mennonite Brethren Church at Yale, South Dakota, had bought for us to be released by the customs officials. Since the United States government had provided the Chinese government with a large number of heavy-duty army trucks, the Chiang regime did not permit any other trucks to enter China.

However, since passenger cars were allowed to enter, it was suggested the pickup truck be converted into a passenger-carrying vehicle. Immediately I went to work and with the assistance of a cabinetmaker, built a camper that could seat six passengers comfortably. The camper, now permitted to leave customs, was towed to a Dodge garage in Tientsin, where it remained parked and in bond for an indefinite period of time. Eventually it was released from bond, but too late to be of use, because the Communists had advanced into the interior and seized the vehicle.

During our stay in Tientsin we were invited to tea by the Wesches of the National Holiness Mission whom we had met on the trip to that city. The Wesches had brought a Servel refrigerator with them from the States. One of the Chinese was quite perplexed to learn it had no place for chunks of ice and that the Wesches lit a flame to make it cold.

With our household equipment out of customs, we moved on to Peking to comfortable quarters at the London Mission compound, where Mr. and Mrs. H. Ruck were in charge. Here we decided that I should travel to Chotzeshan alone to ascertain the amount of war damage and loss of property on the mission compound.

The train to our station slowly meandered through the steep mountains and valleys where bridges and much of the railroad had been badly damaged during the long war. As a

precautionary measure two flat cars were pushed ahead of the locomotive. When I arrived in Chotzeshan the brethren welcomed me heartily and arranged for a welcome service in the afternoon. Many brethren were missing. A number of the most effective and influential national workers had left the KMB mission and only a few evangelists and pastors had returned. We had been gone for six years and I could not easily recall much of the language. The brethren, however, insisted I bring them a message from the Word.

The home where we had formerly lived and some of the homes for evangelists and Bible women had been ruined and had to be razed. The church building, the primary school, and the mission compound wall had been badly damaged. The major part of the wall around the back yard of the compound lay in ruins and could not be repaired. After acquainting myself with the spiritual status of the church and appraising the material damage, I returned to Peking. My report, although enlightening, was not encouraging. However, we immediately bought the most necessary supplies and planned our return to the mission field.

The four of us, having agreed to resume the work at Chotzeshan, left the London Mission by taxi for the Peking railroad station. It took three coolies to carry our baggage into the train, creating quite a scene along the station platform: Coolie No. 1 carried the Val-a-pak and a suitcase tied together and hung over one shoulder, and a case of powdered milk in one hand; Coolie No. 2 carried two suitcases on his shoulder and another one in his hand; Coolie No. 3 carried a large bedding bundle, one suitcase on his shoulder, and another suitcase in his hand. I followed next with the tickets, a bulging brief case, and my typewriter. Elizabeth Hofer followed with a blue zipper bag containing a steamer rug in one hand, a mop stick in the other, and a red blanket draped over her arm. Anna Klassen, with quick short steps, carried a brown shopping bag filled to capacity with leftovers in one hand and a smaller "hold-all" bag in the other. Finally, Mrs. Wiens, a straw basket of lunch in one hand and a packed sewing bag in the other, and a roll of 36-inch screen with an umbrella stuck into the center under one arm, brought up the rear.

Thanking the Lord for our safety, we left Peking at 5:45 a.m. and arrived at Chotzeshan the next morning at 7:30. It had rained the day before and the roads were muddy, but we

put on our overshoes and made our way to the mission compound with dry feet. The Chinese brethren, not expecting us until the following week, had sent no one to the station to meet us. However, they soon came to our assistance when they discovered us trudging along with our baggage.

It is difficult to describe our feelings when we entered the mission compound. All household goods, furniture, and movable property was gone. Many of the wooden floors had been ripped out and most of the doors and windows removed. Some of the wood had been used as firewood. While the physical plant lay in a state of disarray, the spiritual condition of the church had also reached a low ebb. In every aspect the mission work had to start from the beginning again.

Realizing that we faced an uncertain future, the four of us moved into a small house which had been repaired. Misses Klassen and Hofer had a bedroom and a small living room at one end and Mrs. Wiens and I had the same arrangement at the other. A small kitchen and dining room served all four. Carpenters and masons were employed to repair the church and the school buildings. However, building materials were in short supply; consequently, floors, doors, and window frames were hard to replace.

In former years the mission had conducted an elementary and junior high school. At that time the school, well attended, had the reputation of being a good school. Now, because of the uncertain political conditions and a lack of national teachers, the school did not reopen. The medical clinic, however, under the supervision of Anna Klassen, opened again. Patients came from far and near to receive treatment and waited in the guest room where an evangelist brought them the gospel.

Chotzeshan, an unwallled city, was exposed to robbers and retreating troops. Invasion by bandits every night forced the missionaries to flee to safer areas which meant separation from one another and from the mission station. At the capital city, Kueisui, the refugees were welcomed by the CIM missionaries and given shelter.

When the situation improved somewhat, I decided to make a trip to Wu Luan Hua, 120 miles northwest of Chotzeshan, an outstation I had never visited. The work here, started under the ministry of elder Yang and his wife in 1936, had prospered for two years until the Sino-Japanese war disrupted it and the Yangs were forced to return to Chotzeshan. Elder Yang, who

accompanied me on this trip, and I were directed to a Presbyterian elder who together with about 20 believers from Shantung Province were refugees in Wu Luan Hua. Elder Chang took us into his house and gave us an appetizing meal. The next morning he arranged for meetings in his house in which both Yang and I participated. After listening an hour, the congregation, anxious to hear more of God's Word, begged us to continue. Having no songbooks, we wrote Psalms on the blackboard and the people sang the praises of God with enthusiasm. The Wu Luan Hua believers, who had become self-supporting, invited the Yangs to return to pastor their flock.

The Sino-Japanese war and the Communist invasion caused much hardship and poverty among the people of Inner Mongolia. I began assisting International Relief with the distribution of clothing, most of which came from the United States. The huge bales were filled with all sizes and styles of men's, women's, and children's clothing. The Chinese people, smaller in stature and less in weight than the average American, found almost all sizes too large. Most of the garments, however, were of superior quality and good workmanship. Each bale also contained blankets and household goods for a number of families.

A number of the bales were to be transported to Taolin for distribution. At this time a former missionary's son, Mr. Oberg, was traveling through Pingtichuan, just east of the Chotzesan mission, with a fleet of Ford trucks for West China. Oberg and I, who had become acquainted during the Sino-Japanese war at Kueisui, now felt the Lord had led us together. He willingly lent us a truck and driver to deliver the bales of clothing to Taolin. Since no one seemed to have any accurate information about the condition of the winding road through the steep mountain passes, Yang from the Hephzibah Faith Mission, who was acquainted with the road, volunteered to go along. The first lap of the trip went without incident, but then we arrived at a sharp bend in the road that seemed impassable. On the one side a high mountain towered above us, while on the opposite a dry canyon prohibited us from moving any further. Yang and I got out and pushed, while the driver attempted to negotiate the curve. Suddenly the truck rolled back and Yang's leg slipped under the rear wheel, bruising his knee badly. We helped Yang into the truck for we had no medical aid to turn to,

resumed our journey and finally delivered the cargo.

On the return trip it began to rain. Night overtook us and by midnight we were quite lost in the mountains. Without tire chains it became impossible to drive on the rain-soaked road. Yang, by this time in severe pain, was unable to assist us. By two o'clock the next afternoon, however, we arrived in Pingtichuan where Yang received help.

In the early spring of 1948, the Lord opened the heavens and poured out his spiritual blessings upon the brethren and the whole community. During the Japanese and Communist occupation most of the churches on the field had been dispersed. Any form of worship was quite difficult, especially since the Christians were not permitted to use the local church buildings for their worship.

For some time God's people had prayed unitedly for a heart-searching revival and had invited pastor Ku Pao Kao from Saratsi, CIM, to conduct services. The local brotherhood made the necessary preparations to accommodate the guests from the various outstations. In his unique manner pastor Ku preached the Word. The Spirit of God, working in the hearts of the people, brought men and women of every class and distinction to the altar, confessing their sins and finding peace with the Savior. More than fifty individuals found Christ during the campaign. Ten of these believers, anxious to follow the Lord in baptism, were baptized and taken into the church. The others waited for further instruction in the Word.

For some time it was prayerfully reasoned that the missionaries on the Chotzeshan field should launch out to fields with few or no missionaries. Such a field, located about a hundred miles east of Chotzeshan, had been vacated by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Thus the Fengchen field, made available to the Chotzeshan mission at first on a loan basis, would eventually, if the Lord would lead in that direction, be occupied on a more permanent basis. The national church in Fengchen favored the move. These two fields, Chotzeshan and Fengchen, would have been adequate for our small KMB conference to maintain and support.

Mrs. Wiens and I prepared to move to Fengchen, the first step in the history of the mission to enlarge the field. We decided that Anna Klassen and Elizabeth Hofer would remain in Chotzeshan. Anna Klassen was to continue with the medical clinic work and Elizabeth Hofer was to engage in house

visitation work. Evangelist Hou was delegated to pastor the small group that remained, and continued faithfully in that work until after the war. But before the time arrived for us to leave, the door closed and we had to remain in Chotzeshan.

And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and by night (Ex. 13:21).

At times when the Lord seemed far away, we asked, "Does he take note of our circumstances, or has he hidden his face?" We called on him to lead us, but seemingly there was no answer. On Monday morning, September 20, 1948, two trainloads of soldiers arrived in Chotzeshan and began looking for living quarters. By Friday morning the military reports of fighting at Liang Ch'eng, ten miles southwest of Chotzeshan, were not good. Elizabeth Hofer offered to take some of our personal belongings to Kueisui for storage and at once packed a number of containers and left on the train.

Saturday morning when one of the men came to work, he was much disturbed to see the rest of us still at our post. He told us, "You must leave on the evening train, you dare not stay longer." We had just finished lunch when the express train from the east arrived in Chotzeshan far ahead of schedule. Feeling something must be seriously wrong, we inquired at the depot whether another train would be coming through. The reply was "Not for sure."

A military train which had arrived the night before was waiting for retreating soldiers from Liang Ch'eng. We asked the military officer in charge of the train if he would allow us to ride along to Kueisui. He granted us permission to board an open coal car. After saying a few hurried farewells, we were on our way. Anna Klassen, Mrs. Wiens and I made ourselves as comfortable as possible in one corner of the car. Although it was late fall and often quite cold at that time, the Lord graciously provided beautiful Indian summer weather. Additional passengers boarded along the way, until there was standing room only. Anticipating the lack of room for baggage, we had taken only essential items along. One other woman held a large rooster in her arms.

The missionaries and the national church had prepared for a possible Communist takeover. The national church had been reorganized so that it might sustain itself in the hour of crisis. About three months' wages were advanced to all the workers

before we left Chotzeshan. After the crisis period, it was taken for granted that we would return and resume our duties again. That hope and desire was not realized. Missionaries had fled before, but now we realized this revolution was as radical as the Revolution of 1912, when the Republic of China was born.

The packed trainload of refugees arrived at Kueisui at midnight of the same day without incident. The cool mountain air was invigorating, but the anxious refugees were like sheep without a shepherd. It was not only midnight, but it was unusually dark. Only a few dim lights were still flickering. The political confusion left many evacuees in a state of despair. Families were torn asunder. Fathers, husbands, and sons on the war front attempted to stay the enemy, often not knowing the whereabouts of other family members. The spiritual aspect was more hopeful. Many of the people cried to the Lord for mercy, and he heard their earnest requests.

When we arrived at Kueisui, we found to our dismay that the retreating troops had commandeered all transportation facilities and left the passengers stranded in the railroad station. Many of the depots in China were located a long distance from the city limits. It was a long walk to the nearest mission compound and we had considerable luggage. Usually there were waiting carts and rickshaws ready to transport passengers, but this time they were absent. One young man who was traveling with us volunteered to stay with the baggage while the three of us made our way to a mission station in the city. With the weather as well as the bandits cooperating, we enjoyed a peaceful walk along the deserted thoroughfare.

As we passed a Catholic hospital, we decided to impose upon the generosity of Father Peters, the director of the hospital. Anna Klassen had often acquired medical supplies for the Chotzeshan clinic from this hospital and a number of Chotzeshan patients had received treatment here. As in the past, the priest was willing to assist the Chotzeshan missionaries and provided us with a midnight lunch and beds. The next morning he served breakfast to Anna Klassen and my wife, while I left for the CIM mission station, arriving there at noon. The Swedish missionaries informed me that they were leaving the next day for Pao Tou, the western terminal of the Peking Suiyuan railroad. There they wanted to charter a plane to fly to Peking. Our original plan had been to stay in Kueisui until the political unrest would subside and then return to Chotzeshan.

This news necessitated a complete change of plans and we worked until the wee hours of the morning, sorting and selecting things which had been stored earlier in Kueisui.

Joining the Swedish missionaries, we left on the heavily loaded trains for Pao Tou, where we stayed at the mission home of Mr. and Mrs. Sven Svenson. Negotiations were begun the next day to charter a plane to fly all of us to Peking. To arrange a flight for 26 adults and 25 children was not an easy matter. It was reported that General Chenault's planes, transporting furs to the East China coast, were not available for passenger service. However, Gus Soderbom, son of a former Methodist missionary in Kalgan, was in charge of the fur shipment in Pao Tou and through his office a chartered plane was made available. The group was allowed 11,000 pounds, including the weight of the passengers. This averaged about 150 pounds of baggage per passenger. We had a natural dislike for fleeing, and our personal belongings had become a burden. By carrying heavy articles for great distances, I had already sustained a permanent arm injury. The day before the departure, all baggage was weighed in order to get an estimate of the total weight. Some had too much baggage and consequently had to leave it in Pao Tou.

On Thursday morning, September 30, 1948, the group of 51 refugees went by rickshaw, horsecarts, and bicycles to the runway which had been built by the Japanese during the Sino-Japanese war. The twin engine B-46 Commando World War 2 cargo plane was to leave at eleven o'clock in the morning and nobody wanted to be guilty of delaying the takeoff. The first plane that landed did not load the passengers, but bales of wool. Consequently, our flight was delayed until the afternoon. At 2:40 p.m. our plane took off and in two hours and five minutes we landed safely at the Peking airport.

In Peking the Chotzeshan group separated from the Swedish missionaries, to live in the London Mission with Mr. and Mrs. H. Ruck, who graciously took us into their home again. We owe them a debt of gratitude for the love and hospitality shown. After a few weeks the Rucks moved to another part of the city and the Chotzeshan group set up housekeeping in the London Mission, remaining there until the American Consul advised us to evacuate.

We now asked the question, "Had not the Lord opened the way to return to China for the second term?" Since we believed

that he had, it was not easy to leave the work and return home again. We continued to hope, of course, that the political unrest would abate and that we would be able to return to the field. The American Consul, however, warned strongly against staying and encouraged U.S. citizens to leave. An American L.S.T., anchored in the Tientsin harbor, was ready to take on those ready to leave. This ship took evacuees as far as Tsingtao, where all were transferred to a huge navy transport, which took us to Shanghai.

On December 1, 1948, quite a large group of missionaries boarded the *U.S.A.T. Republic*, which took us to Seattle, Washington. The Republic, an old hospital ship, carried extra weight in the hull for smoother sailing, thus reducing seasickness. We arrived in Seattle during a dock-workers strike, which meant we would not reach our respective homes by Christmas.

In Seattle the four of us separated. Elizabeth Hofer took a train to South Dakota and Anna Klassen went to Kansas. Mrs. Wiens and I, headed for Fresno, California, traveled through the beautiful Cascade mountains on Christmas Day. The scenery was indescribable, with every tree and twig laden with sparkling white snow. All that beauty helped compensate for the disappointment of missing Christmas with loved ones.

One year after the Chotzeshan group left Peking, Filip Malmvall, the business manager at the CIM (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) in Tientsin, wrote that he had communicated with Han Tsi Tan of Kueisui. Mr. Han had been given the responsibility for the funds of the Inner Mongolian mission when the missionaries had to leave. Han reported the mission station at Chotzeshan had been occupied by the Communists and all the evangelists and workers had to move out and seek housing elsewhere. Evangelist Li, still serving at Chi Hsia Ying, was carrying on a small business to earn his livelihood. Han had had no word from Tu Mu Erh Tai. In Taolin, however, the church was active. Evangelist Yang was the only one who was working full time for the mission at Wu Lan Hua. Mr. Han had been paying Yang his salary and there was still some money left in the treasury. The Chevrolet pickup was still parked at the Frazer garage in Tientsin.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Li Ung Bing, *Outlines of Chinese History*, p. 63.
2. *World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. (G) 8, p. 348.
3. *Chinese Hand Book*, 1950.
4. Interview by Mrs. Waldo Hiebert with Mrs. F. V. Wiebe.
5. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, 1922.
6. *KMB Conference Yearbook*, 1922.

Chapter 2

1. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, August 8, 1923.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. John King Fairbanks, *The United States and China*, pp. 182-183.
5. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, July 4, 1923.
6. Stuart Genzel, *Mongolia: The Church in Asia*, edited by Donald Hoke, pp. 447-448.
7. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, August 15, 1923.

Chapter 3

1. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, May 20, 1925.
2. *Ibid.*, November 19, 1926.

Chapter 4

1. Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, pp. 186-193.
2. Robert Hall Glover, *The Progress of World Wide Missions*, p. 148.

Chapter 7

1. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, 1934-36.

Chapter 8

1. Basil Miller, *Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek*, pp. 130-131.

Chapter 13

1. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, 1923-31.
2. Li Ung Bing, *Outline of Chinese History*, p. 492.
3. Paul H. Clyde, *The Far East*, p. 120.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
5. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*.

Chapter 14

1. Paul H. Clyde, *The Far East*, p. 142.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

Chapter 15

1. Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, p. 274.

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THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA, winding 1,500 miles over mountain and plain, and from 15 to 50 feet high and 15 to 25 feet wide, is a reminder of the country's long struggle to keep out invaders from the North. For centuries it served as a boundary line between China and Mongolia. To reach the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren mission field in Inner Mongolia, missionaries had to cross the Great Wall. On the other side, shadowed by this barrier, they began the task of breaking down walls to the message of the Gospel.

Relive with A. K. and Gertrude Wiens the years of mission activity of Krimmer Mennonite Brethren missionaries in Inner Mongolia before the doors closed in the forties.

A. K. AND GERTRUDE WIENS spent ten years in Inner Mongolia. Mr. Wiens was a graduate of Tabor Academy and held degrees from Fresno State University and University of Southern California. Before his death in 1977 he had taught at Grace College of the Bible, Biola College, and Southern California College and served as a pastor. Mrs. Wiens worked as a nurse's aide for a number of years. She is a member of the Butler Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church in Fresno.